The Hand of God

A THEOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE

MARTIN J. SCOTT, S.J.

THE HAND OF GOD
A THEOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE

BY
MARTIN J. SCOTT, S.J.
AUTHOR OF "GOD AND MYSELF"

WITHDRAWN

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A tender child of summers three,
Seeking her little bed at night,
Paused on the dark stairs timidly.
"O Mother! take my hand," said she,
"And then the dark will all be light."

We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before;
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

PREFACE

THE Constitution of the United States is a very plain document. Yet thousands of volumes have been written to explain its meaning. Even now it is only the Constitution lawyer who may be expected to speak with assurance on it. That does not mean that the people at large are ignorant of it. They know in a general way all that is necessary about it. But if called on to explain it to those of other nations they might feel rather embarrassed to do so. They know enough about it to admire and love it, and they would know in a general way if anything was done contrary to its spirit. And that is sufficient for the average citizen.

But there are some who desire to be thoroughly conversant with whatever subject concerns them. They want to be well informed for their own satisfaction and for the enlightenment of others. These make a study of the constitution by reading what leading jurists have written in regard to it, and by talking about it when opportunity offers.

It is so with religion. The majority of mankind know the essential teaching of the Christian Religion. They understand all that is necessary

in order to live as God directs. They are not concerned about a critical knowledge of Faith. Theirs is a practical knowledge, and it is enough for the generality of mankind. But there are some who desire to know their religion intimately. They wish to be its champion if need be. At least they desire to give to an enquirer a reason for their faith and practise.

Theologians study religion as lawyers study the constitution. But we can not all be theologians as we can not all be lawyers. However as one may obtain a good notion of the constitution without being as conversant with it as a lawyer, so one may be well versed in religion without the long and laborious study of the theologian.

The present volume is intended to present the Catholic religion to the ordinary reader in a way which will be simple but sufficient. I should say rather that it aims at presenting some subjects of the Catholic religion, for I have selected only a few topics. But they are such that if rightly understood will throw light on the entire matter. Moreover they are subjects which are not any too well understood by a great many people. Also they are the very things which those outside the Church persist in misunderstanding and misrepresenting.

A Catholic should therefore have a good talking

knowledge of these subjects. A non-Catholic will find in them, I trust, an explanation which will remove prejudice and misunderstanding. Christ was misunderstood and misrepresented. His Church shares His fate. This misunderstanding is a mystery in His case as well as in hers. But we are not called upon to explain God's ways. Our duty is to accept His dispensations and to do our part.

I have named the volume " The Hand of God," as it is my purpose to show God's work in the world and His guidance of it by His Church. Theology means a word about God. Such this book attempts to be. In a plain and familiar way it aims at bringing God closer to us. It tries to show God and His work in a true light.

On account of environment and association many people see the Catholic Church in a false light. They are color-blind in regard to her. This volume hopes to present God and His Church aright. To the Catholic it will recall the teaching of his Faith; to the non-Catholic it will present the Church as she is, the Bride of Christ. By her He rears children unto life everlasting. By her He fashions mortals into immortals. By her the Blood Divine is transmitted unto mankind making the children of men to be the children of God.

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CHAPTER I

MIRACLES

IT may be said without any hesitation that Christianity is founded on miracles. If there have been no miracles, Jesus Christ and His religion are frauds. The birth of Christ was a miracle, His resurrection was a miracle. If then miracles are not possible, or if they did not occur, Christianity rests on a false basis, and the sooner it is swept from the earth the better. That is plain enough about the attitude of Catholics on miracles.

The gospel is one long series of miracles. If therefore miracles cannot occur, the most sacred and authentic record in the annals of mankind must be cast aside as fraudulent. That is plain. It also gives us the reason why the opponents of religion deny the possibility of miracles. If they

can only do away with miracles, they can do away with Christ and the Catholic Faith.

And if they can set that aside, they can live as they like. For if the Catholic Church is not divine, no other is. That is why the enemies of religion direct all their attacks against the Catholic religion. They do not mind the others, for they know that if Catholicity falls, all the others fall with it.

And that is where the sects outside make their great mistake. They do not see that they are kept afloat by the slight lines which connect them with the Bark of Peter. If Peter's vessel, the Church, goes under, all revealed religion goes to the bottom.

Hence when Voltaire and his followers would undermine religion, they trained their guns on the Catholic Church. With the insight of Satan, they saw the basis of the whole supernatural structure and exerted their efforts to overthrow it. That basis was the miraculous. If they could assail the miraculous and show that it was a fabrication, they could rear their own edifice of infidelity and live in security the life of pagans.

Make no mistake about it, that was the underlying motive back of the attack on miracles. In order to live an animal life, to give full rein to beastly passions, it was necessary to remove the restraint of religion. Those evil men did not

care about the truth. They were not anxious for the truth, it was not solicitude for it that made them attack miracles. What they wanted was a free broad path of life. Their whole life was given over to the doctrine, "eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." But Christ said: "To-morrow indeed you die, and after death the judgment."

If men could only get rid of that judgment! So Voltaire and his adherents, whose lives were such as to make the thought of judgment a nightmare, resolved that there would be no judgment. To carry out that resolve they denied all supernatural religion, saying that the supernatural was based on the miraculous and that miracles were impossible.

At first these opponents of miracles were infidels. Gradually as Protestantism drifted towards rationalism and infidelity, Protestants began to deny the miraculous. At first they merely denied miracles of later days, admitting the gospel miracles. But soon their inconsistency brought them to the point where they had to reject miracles altogether, or accept them as possible at any period of time.

But to accept modern miracles would be to accept the only Church in which they are wrought, the Catholic. Rather than do that, they set themselves against the possibility of miracles alto-

gether, and now you have the sad fact that outside the Catholic Church the supernatural is dead or dying.

Once a person is at variance with a thing, it is almost impossible for him to see fairly or rightly in regard to it. Take two friends who have a falling out. Before the quarrel each thought the other just the right sort. Otherwise they would not have been such friends. After the breach each thinks the other everything but what he is. They fail to see the good points in one another which formerly they admired. Instead, these good qualities now loom up as faults, vices, villainies. Now the two friends in themselves have not changed, but only their mental attitude towards each other. A man does not change his nature over night. If he was the right sort for fifteen or twenty years, he does not become the bad sort over night.

I have known men who were partners in business for years. In a friendly manner they went on in mutual trust and respect. They decided eventually each one to go in business for himself. In a very short time they became unfriendly and soon after enemies. What each one became in the estimation of the other I need not say, save to remark that neither ever saw the other right thereafter.

The Catholic Church and the world are at en-

mity. By the world is not meant the material earth, but the people who live only for the life that ends in the earth. These people do not want any interference with a good time. But the Church tells them that their good time must be in accordance with God's law. Away then with that law!

It is in this frame of mind that they deny miracles. They start out by saying that miracles are impossible. So they will not weigh evidence and will not listen to reason. The whole miraculous idea is false, according to them, so why waste effort on it? But if miracles, instead of proving the truth of the Church proved the right to live as you like, they would look into miracles, you may be sure, and believe in them. But as miracles are the finger of God pointing to the truth of His religion, they refuse to see them.

But if miracles are not true, why should Catholics uphold them? Has not a Catholic the same desire for a good time as other men? Why should Catholics forge a chain to enslave themselves?

If miracles did not occur, why did the twelve apostles die for them? Why did eleven millions of martyrs endure imprisonment, exile, torture and death? Have not we Catholics bodies and passions and aspirations for enjoyment as well as others? What good does it do us to uphold the

miraculous? No good, unless the miraculous is actually a reality.

If miracles are not realities, Catholics are the biggest fools on earth, and the Church is the biggest fraud in the world. But a fraud does not last twenty centuries! And the best living body of people in the world are not fools.

If you go over the past twenty centuries, who are the noblest types of humanity on the pages of history? The believers in the supernatural. Men and women of exalted virtue, of heroic self-sacrifice, of highest ideals. Men and women who established hospitals, asylums and all kinds of charities. All the beneficent institutions on earth are the outcome of the religion which taught us that we are all children of God in heaven who is our Father.

It was Jesus Christ Himself who brought into the world the great truth of the brotherhood of man. He taught us to pray to God Almighty, and in doing so to say Our Father. It is His religion, based on the miraculous, that gave us the noblest men and women of all time. Now such a religious work cannot be a fraud. His followers are not fools.

On the other hand, look at the lives of Voltaire and his following who inaugurated the attack on the supernatural. If ever there was a man on this earth who wallowed in moral filth as swine

wallow in the mire, it was Voltaire. But he was also a clever devil. He could say things to make a corpse giggle. He poked fun at everything about religion. He made it fashionable to laugh at sacredness. He discredited religion by a pen steeped in sarcasm and diabolism.

You know how easy it is to ridicule the loftiest and most sacred things in the world. A wretch of the street corner can mock the virtue of a St. Francis. Yet the difference between the two is as hell and heaven. But to come at once to the fact of miracles.

If opponents of the miraculous would investigate miracles in the scientific way they examine other things, they would never reject them. If they accepted evidence for the miraculous on the same grounds that they do in ordinary scientific matters, they would be forced to acknowledge miracles.

By a miracle we mean a visible occurrence which is above the powers and laws of nature. It is something which transcends the ordinary powers of earth. Hence we call it supernatural, that is, something higher than the natural. Since no one but God is capable of interfering with nature's laws, a miracle or supernatural fact is evidence of God's handiwork. It means God's activity in a special and unusual way.

The first great miracle is Jesus Christ Himself.

If He is not a supernatural being, how is it that He gave the world ideas which are beyond the range of human concept? His teaching is so far above that of the greatest philosophers that it is as the sun compared to a candle light. He is the only being in the world who talked and acted as God.

In the Sermon on the Mount He speaks as the supreme Lawgiver, whose authority is equal to that of Jehovah. He does not say: "Thus saith the Lord," but: "I say to you." Again the Scribes and Pharisees remarked that He did not teach as others, but as one having power (Matt. vii, 28–29). "You have heard that it was said to them of old, 'thou shalt not kill,' but I say to you that whosoever is angry," etc. He puts Himself on an equality with God who gave the Ten Commandments, and makes a complement to the Decalogue. No mere man would dare amend the Commandments of Jehovah.

"Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father in heaven." Could that come from a human mind? He claimed power to change the observance of the Sabbath, saying that He was "Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matt. xii, 8). No human being could dare to alter God's law. He said to Peter: "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Could a man be so presumptuous?

Christ, therefore, was more than man,—He was God, the first miracle of Christianity. Unless Christ were a supernatural being, and indeed God, how could He dare say: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls" (Matt. xi, 28). Unless Christ were God He was not meek and humble, but a mountain of pride and fraud. He says also: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me"; "He that shall lose his life shall find it." What arrogance if He is not God!

Finally, He declares Himself the Supreme Judge of the living and the dead, and He rewards all mankind and punishes them in accordance as they serve Him or disobey Him. He tells the world that whatever good or bad they do to others, they are doing it to Him. "As long as you did it to the least of My brethren you did it to Me." What wretched pride unless He is truly the Supernatural Being who was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost. That was the first miracle of Christianity.

And we know that His deeds were in keeping with His words. He said: "All power is given me in heaven and on earth." And He displayed all power. He was the greatest wonder worker. His whole life was a series of miracles. He gave

sight to the blind, made the leper clean, raised the dead, calmed the elements and arose from the dead Himself.

Now if Jesus did not perform all these miracles, we have, in the words of St. Augustine, a greater miracle. The establishment of Christianity without miracles is a greater miracle than those claimed for it. I have not the time here to develop this point fully, but to a man of sense it is sufficient.

And how about the miracles nowadays? Go to Lourdes. Before our very eyes we see things which never happened in the world before. There was a time when the deeds at Lourdes were denied. But after scientists and skeptics and infidels found the facts before their eyes, they could not deny them. By their own testimony the cures at Lourdes are admitted as real. The "Annales des Sciences Physiques," a skeptical review, whose chief editor is Doctor Richet, Professor of the Medical Faculty of Paris, speaks as follows: "Unprejudiced minds cannot but be convinced that the facts stated are authentic."

So much for the cures. They are admitted by distinctly unreligious yet scientific men. But they cannot admit these cures as miraculous without admitting the religion which they attest. So what do they do? They try to explain them by occult forces. They say that the cures are wrought by

an exaltation of the spirit which reacts on the body as a stimulus and effects the cure. It is their last stand. But infants have been cured! Infants are not capable of imagination or expectation or any such stimulus.

It is the power of God. It is His seal on the honor which the Church gives His Blessed Mother. It is His voice proclaiming the truth of the Catholic religion. It is His encouragement to the world in these dark days of sin to follow the light of faith which leads to the light of glory.

As the present age boasts of its scientific methods and worships at the shrine of material evidence, I give herewith a twentieth century miracle, with all the substantiation which the most rigorous legal or scientific investigation postulates. I ask you as a lawyer or scientist to consider the following facts, and, if there is no possibility of denying them, to accept what they demonstrate.

It is all very well to deny the possibility of miracles, but facts defy all theories. A hundred years ago theorists might have denied the possibility of submarines, fighting airplanes and wireless telegraphy. To-day they are realities. Indeed, it is these three previously impossible creations which form the main mechanism of the World War.

I now present for your consideration a miracle, and I ask you to act in its regard with the same

sincerity that actuates you in other things. Do not place yourself in the class of those who are not open to conviction. A man who closes his eyes to evidence is like the ostrich, which fancies it conceals its body by hiding its head in the sand.

We are inclined to deny the possibility of whatever we do not want to acknowledge. Men who have committed themselves to a denial of the supernatural hate to reverse themselves. That is why the opponents of the supernatural will not yield to evidence which, in other matters, they would consider conclusive and compulsory. But to you I present the following facts in hopes that you want the truth. And now for the miracle.

On the 17th of December, 1899, the fast mail on the way from Bordeaux to Paris met with a collision. In the mail car was a Post Office express clerk, Gabriel Gargan, thirty years old. At the time of the wreck the train was at a speed of fifty miles an hour. By the crash Gargan was thrown fifty-five feet. He was terribly bruised and broken and paralyzed from the waist down. He was barely alive when lifted onto a stretcher.

Taken to a hospital, his existence for some time was a living death. After eight months he had wasted away to a mere skeleton, weighing but seventy-eight pounds, although normally a big man. His feet became gangrenous. He could take no solid food and was obliged to receive

nourishment by a tube. Only once in twenty-four hours could he be fed even that way.

He brought suit for damages against the railway. They tried to compromise by paying him 3000 francs annually as long as he lived, but he declined the offer, and brought the case to the courts. After weighing all the evidence under the scrutiny of the corporation's lawyers, the court gave a verdict in his favor of 6000 francs annually, and besides, an indemnity of 60,000 francs. The railroad brought the case to the Appellate Court. This tribunal confirmed the verdict of the former court, and the case was ended.

Gargan's condition was pitiable in the extreme. He could not help himself even in the most trifling needs. Two trained nurses were needed day and night to assist him. That was Gabriel Gargan as he was after the accident, and as he would evidently continue to be until death relieved him. About his desperate condition there could be no doubt. The railroad fought the case on every point. There was no room for deception or hearsay. Two courts attested to his condition, and the final payment by the railroad left the case a matter of record. Doctors testified that the man was a hopeless cripple for life, and their testimony was not gainsaid.

Previous to the accident, Gargan had not been to church for fifteen years. His aunt, who was a

nun of the Order of the Sacred Heart, begged him to go to Lourdes. He refused. She continued her appeals to him to place himself in the hands of Our Lady of Lourdes. He was deaf to all her prayers.

After twenty months in the hospital, the surgeons advised an operation, but he would not consent to it. The doctors told him that he would die otherwise. "Then, let me die," he said, and asked to be brought home that he might die amidst his family. At home, his mother pleaded with him to go to Lourdes. He would not heed her. Finally, to satisfy her, he agreed to go.

It was now two years since the accident, and not for a moment had he left his bed all that time. He was carried on a stretcher to the train. The exertion caused him to faint and for a full hour he was unconscious. They were on the point of abandoning the pilgrimage, as it looked as if he would die on the way, but the mother insisted, and the journey was made.

Arrived at Lourdes, he went to confession and received holy Communion. There was no change in his condition. Later he was carried to the miraculous pool and tenderly placed in its waters. No effect. Rather a bad effect resulted, for the exertion threw him into a swoon and he lay apparently dead. After a time, as he did not revive, they thought him dead. Sorrowfully they wheeled

the carriage back to the hotel. On the way back, they saw the procession of the Blessed Sacrament approaching. They stood aside to let it pass, having placed a cloth over the face of the man whom they supposed to be dead.

As the priest passed carrying the Sacred Host, he pronounced benediction over the sorrowful group around the covered body. Soon there was a movement from under the covering. To the amazement of the bystanders, the body raised itself to a sitting posture. While the family were looking on dumbfounded and the spectators gazed in amazement, Gargan said in a full strong voice that he wanted to get up.

They thought it was a delirium before death, and tried to soothe him, but he was not to be restrained. He got up, stood erect, walked a few paces, and said he was cured. The multitude looked on in wonder, and then fell on their knees and thanked God for this new sign of His power at the shrine of His Blessed Mother. As Gargan had on him only invalid's clothes, he returned to the carriage and was wheeled back to the hotel. There he was soon dressed, and proceeded to walk about as if nothing had ever ailed him. For two years no food had passed his lips, but now he sat down to table and ate a hearty meal.

The news of the cure spread fast. Every one knew of his case. At the time of the lawsuit, the

papers were filled with descriptions of his terrible and incurable injuries. His was a public case. In a short time, therefore, the doctors began to arrive and to investigate. Not one denied the fact of the cure. No one questioned his former incurable condition nor his present soundness. The records of the case were official and public from the day of the accident to the day of the instantaneous cure. It was a celebrated case. The doctors were non-plussed. Here was evidence upsetting all theories against the supernatural. They could not find a loophole. Many of the doctors bowed down and acknowledged the miraculous, but others remained blind, like the Scribes and Pharisees on beholding the miracles of our Saviour.

It will be so to the end. But to the sincere and candid lover of truth, the evidence for the supernatural is clear as day. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name" (St. John i, 1–12).

On August 20th, 1901, sixty prominent doctors examined Gargan. Without stating the nature of

the cure, they pronounced him entirely cured. Gargan, out of gratitude to God and His Blessed Mother, consecrated himself to the service of the invalids at Lourdes.

Fifteen years after his miraculous cure, he was still engaged in his strenuous and devoted work. He was for years a living, visible testimony of the supernatural. Lifting the helpless from their cots, aiding the cripples, ministering to the afflicted, he was to be seen day after day, a living miracle. He may be there yet, for I have not heard of his death, but millions have seen him, and millions knew what he was before he came to Lourdes.

Gentlemen of science, there is a miracle as well attested as anything your scientific investigations have established!

CHAPTER II

FAITH

CATHOLICS often refer to their religion as "Our Holy Faith." By this they understand that it is a revealed religion as opposed to a reasoned-out religion. Revelation or revealed truth is the basis of Catholicity. This revealed truth has been given by the inspired writers of the Old Testament, and last of all by Jesus Christ in the New.

As the name indicates, revelation is something revealed to us, something told us by a person who gives us information about something otherwise closed to us. Sometimes in a court trial we read of a revelation. A witness comes forward unexpectedly and throws light on the matter which otherwise could not be obtained. What he says may be startling, almost unbelievable, but if he gives corroboration and if his character is good, his revelation changes the whole aspect of affairs.

Revelation in religion is much the same. In the investigation of religious truth man can discover by reason that there is a First Cause of all things, a Rewarder of the good and a Punisher

of the wicked. A few eminently intelligent men might learn a little more about God. There the matter would rest were it not for revelation.

God, the author of nature, deigns to speak to us of Himself more explicitly than does nature. This He does by those chosen men whom we call inspired and whom Scripture calls prophets. We say they were inspired because the message they declared was breathed into them from above. They were simply the instruments of the Creator. They themselves perhaps sometimes did not understand more about the message than those to whom they delivered it. They were God's dictaphone. Through them God has told us things about Himself we should never know otherwise.

By His prophets He reveals to us that there is but one God. "See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God besides me" (Deut. xxxii, 39); "God our Lord is One" (Deut. vi, 4); "Before me there was no God formed and after me there shall be none" (Is. xliii, 10); "I am first and I am the last and besides me there is no God" (Is. xliv, 6). You may say, is it not evident that there is but one God? It is not. All the nations except the children of Israel worshiped many gods.

Again, by revelation we know that God has no defects. "God is faithful and without any iniquity" (Deut. xxxii, 4); "In me is all grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of life and

of virtue" (Eccles. xxiv, 25); "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v, 48); "There is none holy as the Lord is" (I Kings ii, 2); "O Lord God, Creator of all things, just and merciful, who alone art the good King, who alone art gracious, who alone art just and almighty and eternal" (II Macc. i, 24). But could any one doubt that God is good, could any one attribute defects to Him? Yes. Read classic literature and see what the gods of Greece and Rome were. Study the religion of any nation and find how very human were their deities.

Solomon tells us of God's infiniteness. "The whole world before thee is as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth" (Wis. xi, 23). Isaias declares His immensity: "Heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool" (Is. lxvi, 1); and His eternity: "The Lord is the everlasting God who hath created the ends of the earth" (Is. xl, 28). And the Psalmist adds: "Before the world was formed, from eternity and to eternity thou art God" (Ps. lxxxix, 2).

Moreover, by revelation we learn that God has not left the world to drift, but in His Providence has regard to all the doings of man. The sinner says: "Who seeth me? Darkness compasseth me about and the walls cover me and no man seeth me: whom do I fear? He understandeth not that God's eyes are far brighter than the sun, behold-

ing all the ways of men, looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts" (Eccles. xxiii, 25). "His eyes are upon the way of men and He consideredeth all their steps" (Job xxxiv, 21). "There is no other God but thou who hast care of all" (Wis. xii, 13). "Thy Providence, O Father, governeth" (Wis. xiv, 3).

I could go on and show from revelation many things about God which otherwise we might not know. In the New Testament Jesus Christ gives us more intimate and personal information about God. He tells us that He is our Father, that He loves us to the extent of sending His only Son into the world in order to bring us to His heavenly home, that no matter how we have offended Him He will forgive us if we return to Him with earnestness, that He hates sin more than we hate our worst enemy, and that unless we atone for our wrong-doing and reform He will banish us forever from His abode.

Now all this knowledge of God which comes by revelation we get by faith. It does not come from our own observation nor from our own reasoning, but from believing it on the word of another. Most of our ordinary knowledge we get by faith. All that we know of distant countries and peoples we take on the word of others. Many other things also we accept on the word of a trustworthy person.

Indeed, if we look closely into it, we shall find that most of our knowledge comes from authority. The education of a child depends almost entirely on his acceptance of what his parents and teachers tell him. And older children are pretty much the same. It is safe to say that education would come to a stand-still if we did not take certain things on the word of others. History for most of us is an act of faith. We take the word of the historian. Not one in ten thousand can or does consult the original documents from which the historian got his data. And so of most branches of learning.

Now faith means taking things on God's word. Ah, you will say, that is just it. How am I to know it is God's word? No one would be fool enough to reject what God says, but how am I to know that it is He who has said it?

A good question. Now of course we have not seen God. We have not heard Him speak. But many heard Jesus Christ speak and He declared the truth by revelation. But how am I to know that what Jesus Christ says is so? Because He declared He was God and proved His declaration by doing what God alone could do.

A miraculous act is the act of the Creator. Jesus did many miraculous acts. By His word He produced sight in the blind, hearing in the deaf, speech in the dumb, life in the corpse. He

commanded the elements, cleansed the leper, changed water into wine, multiplied the loaves and fishes, and healed the dying at a distance. He forgave sins, foretold the future, predicted His passion and death, and rose from the dead as He proclaimed He would. All these divine acts prove Him divine. He appealed to them in proof of His divinity. They were the power of God proclaiming Jesus Christ the Son of God. They were the divine seal on His mission.

Our faith, then, rests on the trustworthiness of Jesus Christ. In all history there is no witness so trustworthy as He. We must then reject all knowledge gotten by faith or accept revealed religion on the word of Christ. If we reject knowledge obtained by faith, we must reject all history. No one now living saw Alexander or Cæsar. No work of theirs remains. The records we have of them and their deeds are what they, or those living at their time, have passed on to us. But all they themselves made or wrote has long since perished. It is what scribes and historians have transmitted to us that we possess. If these transmitters are not trustworthy and trusted, we have no data for our knowledge.

So it is accept trustworthy witnesses or reject historical knowledge. But we would not think of rejecting history. Therefore we should not think of rejecting faith. For faith rests on the

most trustworthy witness recorded in history, Jesus Christ.

If it is so plain as that, why do so many not believe? Have you ever been present at a court trial? How variously the witnesses testify. Why? They are carried away by passion. Passion blinds. That is why the judge hears, sifts and decides. People reject Jesus Christ and accept Cæsar. Why? The acceptance of Cæsar does not interfere with the passions of men, but the acceptance of Jesus Christ does.

If you believe in Jesus Christ, you must live by His word; either that, or stand condemned by Him. And those blinded by passion, whether it be pride or lust, fancy that like an ostrich they can bury their head in the sand and ignore Christ and His judgments. "The sensual man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to Him, neither can he understand them" (I Cor. ii, 14). "The Holy Spirit of discipline fleeth from the deceitful, and withdraweth Himself from the thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide when iniquity enters in" (I Cor. ii, 15).

Faith is evident enough to persuade, but not to compel. God made us free and will not force us. But, apart from compulsion, God has done everything in His power to have us live by faith. But why should He want us to live by faith? Why

not manifest Himself to us directly and show Himself to us in a way there should be no doubt?

If He did, we should be so awed by His majesty that we should lose our free will. If we once saw God, His beauty and goodness would so attract us that we should find it impossible to be drawn aside by anything else. His majesty would paralyze us into submission, His voice would hypnotize us into service, no matter what the counter-attractions.

In a word, we should be overpowered by His glory and fascinated by His loveliness, so that nothing would have the power to draw us into sin. We should be confirmed in virtue, willy nilly. As the eye loses power of sight after looking upon the dazzling splendor of the sun, so should we lose our free will if we once beheld God face to face, or witnessed directly any of His attributes. So He is perforce obliged to speak to us by revelation if He would respect our free will.

But there is another reason why He wants us to live by faith. As our Creator He is our sovereign Lord. He has dominion over all creation. Dominion is shown by overlordship. When we as colonies were under the dominion of Great Britain, her dominion over us was shown by her appointment of governors and by exacting tribute. God as Lord of mankind requires tribute from us. We call this paying of tribute worship.

This tribute consists in carrying out His orders. He wants us to acknowledge Him as the author of our being and of our possessions. Hence He commanded His people in the Old Law to give Him tribute of both. Tribute for their possessions was given by offering to Him in sacrifice the choicest of their fruits and flocks. Tribute for their being was offered by the observance of His law.

Man's greatest personal endowments are free will and reason. God exacts tribute for both. By keeping the commandments we pay tribute for our free will. By faith we pay tribute for our reason. How? By faith we sacrifice our understanding on the altar of God's word, for by faith we accept what our understanding does not comprehend. On God's word we take a statement which is beyond our capacity to verify. We give up our judgment on His say-so. In a word, we sacrifice our noblest possession, reason, to God. To His veracity we bow down our intellect. It is the noblest sacrifice a man can offer the Creator.

For consider. Sacrifice is measured by what it costs. Now what does man value most? Reason. A man will give up anything rather than his own opinion or judgment. It is the hardest thing to relinquish. Even an ignorant man clings to his own views. Now to give up your own judgment or reason constitutes a real sacrifice. By faith that is what we do.

Faith therefore is the submission of our highest faculty to Him who has dominion over us. As the mind is more than matter, so is this tribute of faith more to God than the offering of fruits or flocks or anything else. It is of such value in God's estimation that He says: "I will espouse thee to me in faith" (Os. ii, 20). By this He declares that we become incorporated into divinity by faith. This is the meaning of St. John's words: "As many as receive Him He gives them the power to become the sons of God."

We receive Him when we receive His word. We receive His word when we listen to His ambassador, the Church: "The gospel preached by me is not according to man, but the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i, 11–12).

CHAPTER III

THE HAND OF GOD IN THE CHURCH

THE wisdom of the Creator is shown in all things. The ways and means of the universe become a greater marvel in proportion as we know them. The most reverent men are the students of nature. Astronomers are lost in admiration at the magnitude and exactness of the firmament. Chemists meet surprise after surprise in the wonders of the elements. Physicists behold a miracle of adaptation in the various departments of their research.

In man himself, what a masterpiece of the Creator do we contemplate! The mind of man, the will of man, the memory of man! The senses, which like outer servants minister unto the brain of man, how wonderfully they are adapted to their task. Sight, touch, hearing and taste bring the outside world into the very mind. How, we know not. In some way material impressions from without are transmitted to the immaterial soul. By speech the intangible thoughts of the mind are conveyed to the outside world. No matter what we consider in the world about us, we find always

a marvelous adaptation of means to the end. This is the wisdom and power of God, who knows all things and can do all things.

Everybody who has studied nature is struck by its wonderful adaptation of means to the end. The wings of a bird, so light and so strong; the shell of a tortoise, so armorlike in its protective build; the hand of man, so strong to grasp, so delicate to execute. The more you go into detail, the more you see to wonder at. The tiniest insect shows as many marvels of adaptation as does the huge elephant. There is the same evidence of design in the firmament that we find in the flower.

There is another masterpiece of God in the world which excites our wonder and admiration no less than the heavens and the earth and man. God has made a creation on earth which shows His wisdom and power as visibly as does the firmament. "Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He who made ocean, sky and mountains made the Church, the Catholic Church. We should find in this creation therefore the adaptation, the perfection and the marvels which characterize His other works. And we do.

Let us look at the plan God had in building His Church and see the means He adopted to carry out that plan. God built His Church as an institution to guide and help man on his journey through

life. This establishment supplies mortals with everything needed on the way from time to eternity.

First of all, by baptism, it gives him a clear title to a heavenly estate. Afterwards in the difficulties of the journey it nourishes him with heavenly food. If he falls from fatigue, or succumbs to the allurements of the wayside, it raises him up again by healing sacraments. When the deceptive voice of the by-paths invites him away from the right road, it sounds the warning of God's judgments. Ever its protecting arm and helpful direction accompany him until, by its last rites, it sees him passing into his eternal inheritance.

Every weakness of man finds in the Church a help to strength, and against every temptation it supplies heaven-made armor. From birth as mortal to birth as immortal the Church established by Christ accompanies the human pilgrim. Mind and heart are directed, encouraged, nourished and conducted aright. One thing only is necessary—the wayfarer must entrust himself to the appointed guidance. Then, as certainly as the sun keeps its appointed course, will man arrive at the portals of heaven. "To as many as receive Him He gives the power to become the children of God."

By her adaptation therefore to her purpose the Church shows she is the handiwork of God. But

not only by her marvelous adaptation to the end for which she was made does she show divine, but also by the inherent qualities which characterize her. In nature's works we observe certain features which plainly indicate divine workmanship. There stand out boldly in creation three things: indestructibility of matter, infallibleness to nature's norm and perfect organization. Likewise in the Church built by Christ there stand out perpetuity, infallibility and marvelous organization.

There is in the universe the law of indestructibility of matter. Christ has endowed His Church with this quality. " I am with you all days to the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 20). "I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you forever" (John xiv, 16). "He gave apostles . . . and pastors . . . for the work of the ministry until we all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ep. iv, 11).

In the works of nature we find invariable laws, absolute reliability according to established norms. So also in the Catholic Church. God has endowed her with infallibility. "He who hears you, hears me"; "The spirit of truth will abide with you forever"; "The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth."

In the works of creation we behold system and order. The organization of the firmament and

the subtle coordination of the physical and chemical world surpass conception. In the Catholic Church we see an organization so perfect that it is the admiration and puzzle of the world, for it is God's work. Twelve fishermen did not do what the greatest statesmen of the world cannot do.

Indestructibility, inerrancy and organization, the three great characteristics of the universe, we find standing out prominently in God's creation, the Church. Every other organization in the world changes, wears out, disorganizes and breaks up. The Catholic Church stands forever the same. Every other organization admits the possibility of error. The Catholic Church in God's name guarantees the truth. She runs her course as regularly and surely as the sun.

Other organizations like meteors flash for a moment, speed on, whither no one can tell, and disappear forever. The sun goes down, but only to rise again in all the glory of morning. And so the Church, fought hard by a wicked world, has often seemed to go down and her glory to vanish, only to rise again more brilliant than ever, always to give life and light to the children of earth. We do not know how the sun holds its course in the firmament. The force of gravity is but a name. What it is no one knows. It is the power of God, that we know. And so the Church continues her course in the world, and it

does so, not by any power we know on earth, but by the power of God.

If the Catholic Church were not a divine creation, she would have gone to ruin a thousand times. There are more discordant elements in her than in any other organization on earth. Different nationalities, different epochs, different passions, ambitions, aims, temperaments and cultures. And yet everything is coordinated, ruled and directed with the precision and cohesion of nature's works. There have been upheavals and disasters in the life of the Catholic Church, but these only serve to emphasize the difficulties of her course and the triumph of her God-given forces. Volcanoes, earthquakes and cyclones are found in nature. We should not be surprised to find them in this work of nature's Creator.

When we consider that the Church has to do with fickle, self-willed human beings and that she must do all her work without interfering with the free will of man, and without appealing to passion, we get some idea of the magnitude of her task and of the significance of her accomplishments. When we further consider that she has had to take crude material century after century and fashion it into her approved form, we marvel at her persistence and must acknowledge her divine life.

For she takes human nature in the rough and without the aid of any worldly inducements, trans-

forms it into the likeness to divinity. As God by the rays of the setting sun transforms the leaden clouds of the western sky into mountains of gold, so does the Church change the clay of human nature into the semblance of divinity. The golden clouds vanish shortly, but man fashioned by the Church after the model of Christ remains forever a sharer of divinity.

What other institution in the world do we find thus manifesting the attributes of the Creator! *Indestructibility, infallibility, order,* these are the traits of the Creator shadowed in His creation.

The Catholic Church lasting all ages, teaching all truth, ruling with perfect organization, proclaims herself, O God, the work of Thy hands. Man's trade-mark is decay. God's is permanence. The Catholic Church is the one permanent organization in the world of men. The Catholic Church shows the workmanship of God in her every feature. St. Paul calls her not only the work of God, but the bride of Christ. God-like she goes on creating out of the beings of time those of eternity. She fashions them "into a perfect man unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ" (Ep. iv, 11). She rears on earth brethren to Jesus Christ, children of our Father in heaven.

CHAPTER IV

THE INVISIBLE WORLD

THE most real things in the world are those which we neither see nor feel. The ether on whose waves the light travels is one of these things. We know it exists on the word of scientists. Without the ether this world would fall back into chaos. There would be no life; for without ether waves there would be no light, and without light no vegetation. All would perish unless the ether existed.

Some confuse ether with air. Air is not ether. We can feel the air though we do not see it. But the ether we neither feel, nor see, nor taste, nor perceive by any of our senses. And yet it is the most real thing in the world. By it we operate wireless telegraphy. By it all nature gets its colors. Were it not for the ether there would be no red rose, nor white lily, nor green field.

This powerful, all permeating substance seems to belong to another world than ours. When we wish to speak of something fanciful we call it ethereal, meaning by that that it transcends our grasp. Until recent years no one, not even the scientists,

knew of the existence of ether. And yet it was in us and around us from the day of creation. Ether is but one of the real things in the unseen world. It is so real that without it our world would cease to be.

Real as is the ether, it is not half so real as our soul.

Some time ago I was talking with a young doctor. I mention the fact that he was young because older men in medicine realize their limitations. Not so the young, as a rule. This young doctor was an atheist. He did not believe in the soul. He did not believe in anything he could not see or feel.

"I have operated on many patients and dissected many bodies, but I never found the soul," said he scornfully.

He made the statement in the presence of a number of physicians and others, and as I was there I considered it a challenge.

"My dear sir," I asked him, "did you ever see the force of gravity?"

For a moment he was dumb. Then he spoke out and said:

"There is no comparison; we have proofs of the force of gravity; it keeps us from flying off into space and it makes the earth a center for all lesser objects."

"Indeed," I rejoined, "and who told you all

this? Did any one ever see the force of gravity or feel it? Did Isaac Newton himself ever come in contact with it? Is it not merely a deduction, a conclusion from the study of phenomena?"

He did not answer for a while, but then replied:

"True, it is a deduction, but that deduction is borne out by facts."

"And what made the deduction, what drew the conclusion?" I asked him.

He saw he was getting cornered, and like all shallow and dogmatic men he was proud, and for a reply turned to abuse, saying it would be a good thing for some people if they minded their own affairs, the clergyman his and the scientist his.

To this I rejoined:

"My dear man, that is what I am doing, but you are not. You began this subject with a sneer at religion. I am going to finish it even if it is to your discomfiture. But I do it, not to embarrass you, but for the sake of truth. Now the force of gravity that holds this world together, what is it? who has seen it? And yet it has been discerned. If it is something without shape, size or color, what power in man discovered it? Not the body, surely, for neither hand, nor eye, nor ear could detect what had no form, color or weight. If none of the bodily senses could perceive it, there must have been something else in man that discerned it, something which could deal

with the unseen, and that was the mind of man, as impossible to see and touch as is gravity itself. If gravity is a reality, and you say it is, so is the soul, which saw it by the spiritual process of reasoning."

As I was speaking, I observed that all were listening to me. When I concluded an elderly and highly esteemed surgeon approached me and said:

"Father, I am not of your faith, but I am nearer to it than ever before."

The young doctor whose flippant remark drew forth the discussion had not a word to say. Like the Scribes and Pharisees, he was silenced but not converted.

Self-sufficiency and pride are passions as well as lust and love of wealth. Passion blinds. And we are like the sightless man of the gospel who was blind until the Lord opened his eyes. Do we realize that there are things within us and without which are of another world than that of matter? The most potent thing in the world is thought, yet we do not see thought. It made the telegraph and telephone and telescope. Thought created the steam engine and the locomotive and the automobile.

There is the spiritual world alongside and permeating the material world, and how many of us see it? There are spiritual values as well as material values, yet how many are blind to them?

People go on from year to year, for many years sometimes, and all they take cognizance of is what they can see and feel and enjoy for the present. But the things of real value, the things that are to last forever, they are blind to. They are busy about a career, about society, about money, and a thousand such things.

It is well to be occupied with these matters, it is necessary, but not to the exclusion of others more important. There is a life for the soul as well as for the body. The soul has a career as well as the senses. Yet how many are so absorbed with bodily comforts, bodily joys, bodily attainments, that they forget all about the soul.

He who gave sight to the blind man and who sees all things and knows all, said: "What does it profit if a man gain the whole world and lose his soul?" That is God's estimate of the two worlds, the world of the soul and the world of the body. He places the whole world on one arm of the scale and a soul on the other, and declares that a single soul outweighs the entire world. Do we see it thus? If not, we are more unfortunate than the poor sightless man who cried out to Jesus: "Son of David, have mercy on me! Lord, that I may see!"

For we do not see how much worth our most valuable possession is. You would pity a poor woman who possessed a wonderful diamond and

did not value it except as a piece of glass, and who gave it for a bit of finery. Each one of us possesses a jewel more valuable than the rarest brilliant of earth, and that jewel is our soul. God who knows values held it so valuable that He purchased it by His blood. It was to redeem our soul that He paid the price on Calvary.

It is as if you saw a poor woman give a brilliant diamond for a piece of bread, and, realizing how she was cheated, you redeemed her diamond by paying for it ten thousand dollars and returned it to her. Would she again part with the jewel for a trifle? And Jesus Christ, seeing that we had thrown away the jewel of immortality, paid a great price to restore it to us. So great was that price that we tremble to think of it. In the gospel He hints at it when He tells us that He is going up to Jerusalem, and that He shall be betrayed, mocked, scourged, spit upon and crucified, and all this for our soul.

Are we not blind then if we do not value what He estimated so highly? There is a film of worldliness over our eyes which blinds us to true values. The great things that count are not those we can see and measure. All the wealth and glory of the most fortunate life will pass away shortly. But the glory of the soul will last as long as God.

Of all the people who were somebody in this

world one hundred years ago, where are they and their possessions now? Nothing went into eternity with them except the things of spiritual value, the things of the soul. And a few years from now, where shall we be with all we have set our hearts on! Only a memory. Yet more than a memory in the real world, in the world that counts, for we shall be either happy with God, or unhappy away from Him. It all depends on how we see things now and value them.

Possessions, honors, pleasures, are good even though they pass away. But they are not good if they blind us to our duty. They are not good if they cause us to sin. They are not good if, instead of leading us to God, they turn us away from Him.

Riches were good for a man like St. Louis of France, who used them rightly and helped the poor and extended the religion of Christ. Honors were good for men like Sir Thomas More who, placed in a position next to the King, refused to do wrong to hold his honors. Pleasures were good for men like Aloysius, who used them as a relaxation and a help to do his duties rightly.

But riches, honors or pleasures which are gotten by wrong-doing are not good no matter how attractive they seem. Lord, that we may see! That we may see the majesty and sacredness of

Thy Law! That we may see Thy great love for us! That we may see the value of our soul! Lord, that we may see our duty here and behold Thee face to face in Thy Kingdom forever hereafter!

CHAPTER V

DOGMA

WE often hear people say that it is not what you believe that counts, but what you do. They are right and they are wrong. For it is true that what you believe does not count unless you follow it out. But it is false that what you believe does not count if you live up to it. It counts both ways, for if your belief is correct it guides you aright, if it is false it leads you astray. I mean, of course, in case you really follow out your belief.

For instance, suppose you believe that it is right to lie! Suppose you believe that it is right to burn your store to get the insurance! Suppose you believe it right to cheat the government in army contracts! So what you believe does matter. Wrong principles lead to wrong actions.

Now dogma is nothing more nor less than the statement of a known truth. We have the dogma of the Trinity, for instance, which states that in God there are three persons. But, you may say, what has that got to do with conduct? How do I

live better or worse for believing in the Trinity? Well, let us see. If there is no Trinity, there is no Second Person of the Trinity. In that case there is no Incarnation. If there is no Incarnation, Jesus Christ is not God, and Christianity is a humbug. If Christianity is a humbug, then I am a fool to live up to its teaching, so good-by all Christian conduct!

So dogma does count. It does matter what you believe. See how dogma counted in our history. The civil war was a war over dogma. The sovereign rights of states was the dogma over which North and South battled. "No taxation without representation" was another dogma which created quite a bit of history and gave birth to our nation. Dogma counts therefore.

All very well, you reply, when there is question of practical matters, but what is the use of insisting so much on belief when it comes to abstract things? What difference does it make, for example, whether or not we believe in the dogma of Transubstantiation? Well, let us see.

Transubstantiation declares that in the Eucharist we have the true body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. That dogma has been the source of countless disputes, dissensions, heresies and disruptions. Why insist on it at such a cost? I am glad to take up this point because it enables me to show that no matter how abstract

a dogma may seem to some, there is really nothing abstract about dogma.

Every dogma has to do with a substantial truth revealed by God, and every dogma is so inherently connected with the rest that, reject one, and all may fall. Moreover, nearly every dogma has a practical bearing on Christian life and conduct. The great dogmas are the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist. These are not abstractions, but realities. Moreover, they have a very practical effect on the lives of believers.

To return to Transubstantiation, why make a fuss over that dogma? Why let it split great bodies of Christians? Because it is fundamental of Christianity, and if you reject it you will soon undermine its foundations. A pretty dogmatic statement, I hear you say. Very well, let us look at it.

Why is a church built? As a temple to enclose the altar. And what is the altar? The table of sacrifice. And what is the sacrifice? The adorable Victim is Jesus Christ. And how is He present? In the Eucharist.

Reject the dogma of Transubstantiation and you have no sacrificing priesthood, no divine offering to make to God. Soon the Church would become just a concourse of people offering to God what they themselves agreed on, as if Christ Himself had ordained no sacrifice. The Church would be-

come what it is actually called in some places, a meeting-house.

So that after the coming of Christ, the divine service would be inferior to what it was before. For in the Old Law they had the Temple and the priesthood and sacrifice.

And furthermore, we find that by rejecting Transubstantiation, the sects have rejected Christ. So dogma does count. The sects that rejected Transubstantiation have ended as we see them today, all the way from crazy Christian Science to blasphemous Bob Ingersollism. And in between you have every shade of opinion and morals that human ingenuity can conceive of.

What is the use of dogma? Why, what is the Constitution of the United States but a dogma? Do we allow any trifling with that? Do we consider that useless, or say that it counts for nothing?

Every big business has a dogma. With some, it is No Credit; with others, Satisfaction First; with others, Contented Employees. These dogmas guide the managers in their conduct of the business, and are the motives which give a character to the concern.

On one of our Court Houses you will find this dogma engraved in stone across the whole front of the edifice: "Liberty is obedience to the law." What does that count for? It tells the man who would transgress the rights of others that liberty

is not license. It tells him that in this liberty-loving country every one must respect the liberty of others. And so I might go on with numerous examples of dogma's significance and necessity.

Once an organization lets go its hold on its guiding principles, it goes to pieces. You see this in every department of life. That is why organization leaders will suffer any temporary loss, no matter how severe, rather than yield on a matter of principle, and dogma is nothing but a principle of religion.

See how at times workmen will suffer and starve for weeks and months rather than yield a point to their employers. You might say that the thing in question is a trifle. So it may look to the outsider, but they see in it big consequences.

Again see how the heads of big business will suffer the closing down of a plant and the loss of millions of dollars on a question of labor dogma. Now these men know what they are doing. They know the value of money. And yet they stand its loss steadfastly for a dogma, "the open shop." And the men who are closed out and who find themselves and their families reduced to beggary know what they are doing. They are fighting for their lives in upholding the dogma of "the closed shop."

And so does the Church know what she is doing in upholding dogma. Do you suppose she does

not regret more than any one else the losses which her adherence to principle has cost her? To hold the dogma of the indissolubility of marriage, she stood firm against Henry VIII, although it cost her a kingdom. To uphold the dogma of the divinity of Christ, she stood firm against Arius, and beheld to her sorrow about half the world become Arian.

To uphold the dogma of the Supremacy of the Holy See, regardless of who its occupant might be, she saw Luther fall away and draw with him half of Europe. But the authority for which she contended then has been her preservation, while the rejection of authority has caused the disintegration of Protestantism and its logical degeneration into rationalism.

Dogma? Why, it is everything. The story is told of a boy who saw a tiny leak in a dyke in Holland and stopped it by plugging it with his little finger. Afterwards he was hailed as the savior of the district, for those who knew realized that the little leak might otherwise have become a mighty flood.

And so it is with dogma. Dogma is the Church's statement of the divine truths given her by Christ for transmission and safeguarding. Rather than compromise on one of these dogmas she would suffer all the tortures of the early martyrs over again. Gladly would she suffer fire and

sword and wild beasts and prison and exile rather than prove false to her trust.

When, therefore, you see any one sneer at dogma and criticize the Church for making so much of it, pity him. That is the most charitable thing to do. Then, if possible, enlighten him. A man who would sneer at the Declaration of Independence would not have much sneer left in him for anything else, if there were any loyal citizens around. The Declaration of Independence is the fundamental dogma of our country.

Now-a-days the slogan is "Stand by the Government." That is proper at all times, but particularly so in times of national peril. It means that we uphold all that our government stands for.

The Church is the kingdom of God. We are her subjects. She is always at war with the world, the flesh and the devil. Her dogmas are her banner. Stand by the flag. Be true to the standard of Christ. Under that banner we march to victory. We cannot lose unless we drop out of the ranks, and no one but ourselves can make us do that.

The dogmas of business, of politics, of government, may or may not be true. The dogmas of the Church are true. She is the mouthpiece of God Himself and she will continue so until the end. From the beginning, during centuries, she has not changed one iota of the truth deposited

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with her, because change is an acknowledgment of error, and there is no error with God.

"In the beginning, O Lord, thou foundest the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment, and as a vesture thou shalt change them and they shall be changed. But thou art always the selfsame" (Ps. ci, 26). "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass" (Matt. xxiv, 35). "I am the Lord and I change not" (Malac. iii, 6). "The gospel preached by me is not according to man, for neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i, 8).

That is our guarantee. There is none so good in the whole world.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

THERE is no doctrine of the Catholic Church so much misunderstood outside the Church as that of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When non-Catholics get the right explanation of this dogma, they exclaim: "Why, how different that is from what we understood before."

Then they go on to say that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is not only reasonable, but that it is inevitable if we believe that Jesus Christ is God. For the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception merely states that the Mother of Jesus Christ, she from whom He drew His blood and humanity, was never tainted in the slightest way by the stain of original sin. That is the meaning of the Immaculate Conception.

It does not mean that the Blessed Virgin was born miraculously, or by special divine cooperation, or anything like that. It simply means that she was born as the rest of us were, from her own father and mother, in the natural way, but that in her case the taint of original sin which is trans-

mitted to every child of Adam was not transmitted to her. By a special privilege of God, due to the merits of her Son to be, and befitting her office as Mother of the Redeemer, she was free from that sin contracted by Adam and made part of the heritage of his posterity.

The sin of Adam in his own case was an actual sin, a serious violation of God's solemn command to him. By that sin, Adam lost the favor of God and was banished from Paradise, and forfeited the title to a heavenly inheritance. As an exile he went forth under God's malediction. Whatever he was, he, as the father of the human race, passed on to his descendants.

As Benedict Arnold in betraying his country lost not only citizenship, but also property rights, so Adam lost the title to God's favor and to Paradise. If Benedict Arnold had descendants, they would have lost title to his rights, property, etc., which but for his treason would have been theirs. Without any actual fault of theirs, they would be under the penalty of forfeiture of all that would have been transmitted to them if he had not betrayed his country and lost his possessions.

In like manner, we all were born in that disinherited condition of Adam, deprived of God's grace and our title to His kingdom. As transmitted to us by our very nature, this original taint implied no actual guilt on our part, but only the

impaired nature which was the result of his transgression. This impaired nature cut us off from God's grace and His heavenly home.

But God's mercy is above all His works, and so, by the sending of the Redeemer, He made it possible for every human being to regain for himself the grace and inheritance which were lost by the primal fall.

Now the meaning of the Immaculate Conception is just this, that the Mother of the Redeemer was exempt from that human stain which impaired every other human being. This exemption was through the merits of her Son to be, and befitting her who was to be the Mother of the Stainless One, the Redeemer Himself. The poet aptly describes this wonderful privilege of the Blessed Mother when he styles her "our tainted nature's solitary boast."

It was only fitting that she, who was to give the Redeemer the blood which He was to shed on Calvary for our redemption, should herself be always and absolutely untainted. And that is the meaning of the Immaculate Conception. It signifies that God made a special exception in her case, so that at her very creation she was made, as regards the soul's freedom from sin, as Adam and Eve were before the fall.

When the Angel Gabriel appeared before Mary to announce to her the message from the Holy

Trinity, that she had been selected to be the Mother of the Son of God to be made man, he saluted her thus: "Hail, full of grace, blessed art thou among women." She who was full of grace and blessed among women was not as other children of Adam. The title was hers alone.

The brightest angel in heaven cannot say to God as Mary can: "Thou art my Son." It is inconceivable that Mary, God's Mother, should be inferior to the angels, who are His servants. Mary, as the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, is enthroned with her Son as Queen of Heaven. The angels are her subjects, even as are the saints. If the angels are immaculate, how much more fitting is it that their Queen should be so.

Fitting was it, therefore, that as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven she should never have been under the dominion of God's enemy, even for an instant. Fitting was it that the trail of the serpent that defiled our first parents should never have soiled the soul of her who was to be the habitation of the Sinless One. Fitting was it that the Mother of God should never have been without His grace and favor.

If we had the choice of our mothers, how wonderfully we should endow them! God had the choice and the fashioning of His Mother, and we

may be sure that nothing which Omnipotence could confer on her was omitted.

Hence theologians affirm that Mary is Almighty God's Masterpiece. All that the Creator could confer on a creature was bestowed on her. Immaculate purity from her very origin was hers. The divinity demanded that. She was the living temple of the Holy of Holies. How could the God of purity permit any, even the slightest stain, in that Temple wherein for nine months He was to dwell!

St. Thomas tells us that it is characteristic of God to fit a person for the office and duty assigned him. Thus he bestowed on Moses and Elias and John the Baptist those wonderful gifts which their position required. As Mother of the Redeemer, Mary was endowed with every qualification for her exalted dignity. Of all these the chiefest and most fundamental is sinlessness, absolute and entire, from her very origin. That is the Immaculate Conception.

Our own mother does not give us our soul, but only our body, yet she is our mother, the mother of the child she gives birth to. So Mary, although not the Mother of the divinity of Christ, but only of His humanity, is, nevertheless, the Mother of the Child born of her, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. Since we cannot separate Jesus Christ

from the Son of God, and since Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ, she is truly the Mother of God.

She was born of human parents just as we were, with this exception, that her Son to be and her God preserved her from the sin of origin, the sin transmitted to the human race from its origin, our first parents. To express this clearly and definitely, the Church states that in her very conception or creation Mary was immaculate, that is, without spot or stain, "our tainted nature's solitary boast."

That is the Immaculate Conception. It does not mean that Mary was born like Jesus without the agency of a human father, but that she was born like the rest of us, but free from original sin. So far is the Church from teaching a divine birth for the Blessed Virgin that she gives the names of the human father and mother of the Immaculate.

Both St. Joachim and St. Ann, the parents of Mary, are honored in the calendar of the saints, and a special feast day is assigned to each in the liturgy of the Church.

It is indeed surprising that in the face of all this the dogma of the Immaculate Conception should be so misunderstood outside the Church. But if her divine Son Himself was misunderstood and misrepresented, we should not be surprised that she, His Mother, shares His fate. It is one of

God's mysteries in dealing with mankind that He allows the most sacred things to be misunderstood. After His own experience among men we should be prepared for anything.

How grateful we Catholics should be that we see things as they are, as God sees them!

CHAPTER VII

DEVOTIONS

OUTSIDE the Church there is a great deal of misconception about Catholic devotions. They are regarded in every manner from admiration to pity or scorn. Like other things connected with the life of the Church, as soon as they are seen rightly they win approbation and love.

What do we mean by devotions? The best reply is to ask another question. What do we mean by being devoted? Devotion to country is patriotic devotion. Devotion to God and His Church is religious devotion. War calls out devotion to country in a special way. The Church is always at war with the world. Devotions are external practises of those devoted to God's cause.

Patriotism does not seal itself up in a cold mental attitude, but bursts forth in songs, parades, speeches, decorations and sacrifices. Devotions in the Church are the manifestations of the ardent lovers of Christ and His kingdom.

The devout Catholic attends mass on week-

days. That is one form of devotion. Another recalls to mind the price our Saviour paid for our redemption by accompanying Him on His Way of the Cross. Another honors Him in the Blessed Sacrament, or crucified. Again, it is His Sacred Heart which draws the devout. And, as the devout soul realizes that God is pleased by having honor bestowed on what He honors, the good Catholic is devout first of all to the Blessed Mother, and then to the martyrs who shed their blood for Him, and after these, to the confessors and virgins who followed so closely His footsteps on earth.

As the patriot wears a button or a badge as an external mark of his patriotism, so the Catholic, devout to Christ and His Blessed Mother, wears their badge or medal. Some lofty citizen might look down upon the ordinary civilian who wears a button or badge, but the men who wear the buttons are the men who carry the guns and fill the trenches. Without parades, speeches and decorations, how much enthusiasm for war's needs would be aroused?

A man can be a citizen by keeping the laws of his country, but the patriot requires more than the cold commands of do and don't. See how the different governments stir up patriotism in times of crises by flag-raising, parades, speeches, decorations, etc. And why? Because human nature

demands it. If you want devotion on the part of the citizens, you must appeal to their sentiments. Laws may make a man comply with duty, but they will not evoke sacrifices.

And so it is in the kingdom of God, the Catholic Church. The commandments point out our duty, they order us to do this and to avoid that. But no one ever becomes distinguished in a service by merely doing his duty. Moreover, by aiming at duty only, one is pretty sure to miss aim. Experience shows that in every walk of life you have to try for more than you achieve. So that even when aiming at doing your duty, you must do a little more. Now the meaning of devotion in the Church is just that. It is doing something more than is absolutely required in order to help us to fulfil what is required of us.

There are all degrees of devotion. Starting with an extra prayer, it may extend to heroic sacrifice. There will always exist noble souls who are not content with doing only what is of obligation. They see how Christ suffered for them superabundantly and how He invites them to a special return of love and generosity, and their generous hearts respond. As Christ did more for them than He was obliged to do, so will they do for Him.

Devotions, consequently, have a two-fold purpose,—to aid us in fulfilling our duty, and to enable

us to show ourselves distinguished in the following of Christ.

Not all devotions suit all persons. We must remember that the Catholic Church is universal. It embraces all time and all peoples. What may appeal to one may repel another. We see this in national patriotism. Some men do not care for parades but are enthused by an oration. Others would not listen to a speech, but would wave a flag all day and march their legs off behind a brass band.

The Church has all kinds, young and old, men and women, learned and ignorant. Each class is helped by a particular devotion. If what aids another does not appeal to you, do not ridicule it. It may be the one plank across an abyss for some poor struggling wayfarer. Suppose an aristocrat who gets his patriotism by brain appeal should decry a parade which stirs up patriotism in an army of workers, what would happen to him? A procession for many means more than an address.

And so in the Church. The Catholic Church is an old institution. For some two thousand years she has been guiding the nations. She knows human nature. Moreover, she has the special help of the Holy Spirit, and she knows what her children require.

Compare the Catholic Church which fosters devotions with the cold Protestant denominations

which discard them. What do we find? The Protestant life is fast ebbing away,—empty churches, discontinued Sunday schools, dust-laden Bibles, and nothing left except a certain social and ethical existence held together by a common bond of opposition to the True Church. "By their fruits you shall know them."

The devotions of the Catholic Church fill the churches Sunday and week-day. The services of devotion are as crowded sometimes as those of obligation. By these devotions a personal bond is formed between the individual and Christ. He is not a far-off God, but a close-by friend, a companion, a leader. The heart warms to Him. Thousands and thousands flock to His standard of special service as a result of devotional practises.

Some give their lives to Christ as Sisters of Charity, or angels of mercy, or teachers of learning and virtue. Strong, manly men devote their brain and energies to carry on the work of Christ and His apostles. As priests, missioners, teachers and workers among the submerged of our big cities, they strive to bring Christ into the lives of millions. Others whose position in life or character does not incline them to these heroic manifestations of devotion become living exemplars of virtue in their various walks of life.

All this is the fruit of devotion. With one, it

was devotion to the Blessed Eucharist that gave inspiration, courage and heroism. With another, it was the Sacred Heart. The Blessed Mother drew on others to serve her Son. The saints, martyrs, confessors and virgins fired yet others to go and do what they themselves had done. And so on.

A non-Catholic dropping into one of our churches and seeing worshipers devoutly praying, wonders what it is all about. No sermon is going on, no service of song, and yet there is the crowd. He wonders. It may seem mechanical to him or mere mummery. And yet, as these devout people leave the church, they go to their duties and trials fortified by intercourse with heaven.

One may have a cross to carry, a heavy cross of illness or privation, or loss of a loved one. But did not Christ carry a heavier cross, and has not this soul who has just made the Stations of the Cross been in company with Christ, following after Him step by step at each of the Stations? From this devotion of the Way of the Cross a new strength to do and to endure comes into the devout soul.

Another has spent a half hour in silent adoration before the tabernacle. While kneeling before the Sacramental Jesus he hears from the Holy of Holies these words of the Sacred Heart:

"Child, give me thy heart. Give it me even though it must bleed in the giving as mine bled for thee." And out again into the world of men this man goes ready for every burden and for every sacrifice. Yet another has stood by the cross with Mother Mary. Perhaps a child of her own has been a sorrow to her. From Mary she learns patience and resignation. And so on.

What a difference between these men of devotion to whom Christ and His cross are a living reality and those others who know nothing of God virtually but the ten commandments. It is all very well to say that it is enough to go direct to God, and that anything besides is catering to ignorance or superstition. Those who so speak do not go to God at all for the most part.

If with the helps that the Church affords so many nevertheless remain cold and indifferent, what would it be without these aids? The man who does not say his beads, or wear the scapular, or make the Stations of the Cross, or pray to some patron saint, soon drops attendance at mass. And then God goes out of his life.

And life without God, what is it but a service of sin. If God does not occupy the heart, passion will. As the heart is to the living man, so are devotions to the true Catholic. God made us. He knows our needs. The Church is God ministering unto us.

CHAPTER VIII

VOCATION

IN days of national peril our country appeals to us to come to her aid. When the great World War was on, rulers, newspapers, billboards, called to the men of fighting age to join the colors. "Your country needs you," "Defend your fireside," "Stop the enemy." These and similar appeals were placarded everywhere. The country called, her sons responded.

That calling was a vocation, at least a temporary one, and vocation means a calling, a calling to do something, to be something. The country called for men to come forward and fight for her, and, if need be, die for her. And they came. For a time their vocation was a military one.

In the same way law may call a man to its practise, and the young man whom this call attracts is said to have a vocation to be a lawyer. Another one may be attracted by the call of medicine, and his vocation is to be a doctor. And so of every department of life.

Religion may call a person to its service, and in this case one is said to have a religious vocation.

It may be to the priesthood, or to be a sister of a teaching or nursing or missionary order, or to be a brother in an order of men who devote themselves to the education and welfare of youth. Among Catholics, as a rule, when we speak of vocation, a religious vocation is more or less understood. Why this should be is not plain, for the word applies to any calling, but it is nevertheless a fact that when the word is used it ordinarily refers to a religious vocation.

If country calls to special service, why should not religion? If in a nation there are posts of danger and sacrifice, why should there not be such in the worldwide Christian commonwealth? If a government may call men and women to leave home and country and comforts, why should not God? And He does. A religious vocation is God's call to generous souls to do the heroic for love of Him.

In every service there are picked men, chosen souls who come forward when hard things are to be done and offer themselves gladly. The rank and file do ordinary routine duty, incur the ordinary dangers and discomforts. But when something of special hardship is pending, something outside the demands of duty, volunteers are called for. Then the heroic souls stand out.

In the Catholic Church there is the great army of the faithful. Their duty is outlined by the

Ten Commandments. Besides these, the Commander-in-Chief, Christ, calls to His side those who seek a greater share in His work, those who seek distinction in His service, and who wish to show their greater love for Him by laboring closer at His side and sharing more intimately the hardships of His campaign.

To the Christian in general God says: "If thou wilt enter into life everlasting, keep the commandments." To the Christian in particular who desires special service Christ says: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all thou hast and come follow me." This is the call of God to higher things, to a nobler life, to a share on earth in the ministry of the gospel.

It was the call that Peter heard and responded to, and John, and Andrew, and the other apostles. It was the call heeded by the holy women who accompanied Jesus in His journeys and labors and ministered unto His needs and those of the apostles. It was this call that struck the eye and ear of Paul and changed him from a persecutor into an apostle.

And all down the ages, it was this call, heard distinctly by the chosen soul, which filled the desert with anchorites, peopled monasteries with monks and nuns, and fired heroic souls with the zeal and courage to say adieu to parents, friends, home, country and comfort and go to far-off lands to

labor among pagans and infidels and savages, to bring into their lives the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is related in the gospel how, on a certain occasion, Jesus at the age of twelve absented Himself from His parents for three days, to their intense anguish. At length they found Him in the Temple, teaching the very teachers of Israel. He was giving a first glimpse of His divinity to the leaders of the people. On Mary's asking Him why He had done thus to His parents, He replied: "Did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

By this reply He showed that nothing could cause Him to give them pain except His Father's business. That was paramount. Jesus wished to show them that the supreme thing in life was the Father's business, doing the will of God.

But why could He not do His Father's business and also keep the Fourth Commandment which says: "Honor thy father and thy mother"? Why should there be a conflict between the commandments of God and His actions? Can God command a thing and also approve of what is opposed to it? No, He cannot. But what He can do and does is to show us that when the supreme work of God's business is on hand, it makes all other work and duties secondary.

As in times of national peril, when the life of the country is at stake, individual rights and duties

yield to the nation's need, so when God calls for special service, that call takes precedence of every other assignment, even though made by God Himself.

It was to teach this lesson, which is the foundation of religious vocation, that Christ acted as He did in this mystery of His life. Let us look at it a moment and see how splendidly it establishes and exemplifies the Christian principle of the higher vocation to God's special service.

At first sight it seems strange that Jesus caused Joseph and Mary the keen suffering which His absence occasioned. If He wanted to stay in the Temple and attend to His Father's business, why did He not as a good Son inform them, and thus remove all cause of anxiety? He could have informed them, but in that case neither He nor they would have suffered on account of His doing His Father's business.

Christ wished to teach the world the lesson that in doing God's will, in obeying God's commandments, and in particular in heeding the call to the higher life, it might be necessary at times to suffer and to occasion sufferings to others dear to us, but that nevertheless God's business must be done. And how does He teach this lesson in the present instance? Just attend.

Jesus wished to teach mankind that God's service at times might call for keen suffering to our-

selves and those dear to us. If in the case before us He had informed His parents of His stay in the Temple they, because they were so holy, would readily acquiesce. It would cause neither them nor him any hesitation or pain. But Jesus had in view the thousands and millions of people who were not so conformed to God's will, and to whom the doing of the Father's business would not be acceptable if it occasioned them loss or pain.

How many parents, for example, oppose the vocation of a child to the priesthood or sisterhood, even though they know the vocation is there? It is evidently the Father's business, but they oppose it because of the pain of separation. Now Jesus teaches us by the pain He permitted His parents on this occasion that the service of God is paramount, even if it cause pain.

No parents ever loved a child as Joseph and Mary loved Jesus and no child ever loved his parents as He did. Yet in the doing of His Father's business, He caused them the most intense anguish and suffered even more Himself. His purpose in the mystery we are considering was to show that God's business may cause pain and loss, but that the business must nevertheless be done.

He could teach this lesson in no other way than by the method He employed. His reply to His parents when they asked Him why He had done so

to them clearly shows His object. "Did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business?" As if He said: "My dear parents, nothing in this world could make me give you pain, I love and honor you too much for that, but a duty assigned me by my Father obliged me to act as I did. Now that you know that, I see that everything is clear to you and you are again happy."

And indeed they were, for God's will was for them the supreme object of life.

When parents give their sons to the army or their daughters to the Red Cross at their country's call, does it not cause pain? What more heart-rending than those partings! Yet because the country calls the sacrifice is made gladly, I say gladly even though the tears run and the heart is pierced. For there is an exultation in giving what you value most to a noble cause. That makes patriotism. And patriotism that does not imply sacrifice is cheap.

God calls to His standard also. He summons at times the best from among His followers to draw away from the multitude and come close to His side, to share more intimately in His Cross and His Crown. Religion that does not imply sacrifice is cheap. If a cause is worth while, it is worth laboring and suffering for. There is no cause in the world so noble as that of Jesus Christ,

for it is a cause in which men and women labor with Him to make themselves and others sharers of the divine nature.

How many generous souls devote time and effort to improve the material welfare of the poor and afflicted. It is a noble work and commended by God. He will bless it. But there is a nobler. Material improvement, no matter how great, is for a short time only. But the cause in which they work who are associated with Christ brings blessings which last forever.

What an honor it is to be invited by a great person to associate with him in some distinguished service. When the nation's head offers a post of difficulty or danger to a citizen, how honored he feels. In these our own times, behold how our leading men offer themselves and their resources to our Chief Magistrate for the service of the country. They consider it an honor to be accepted.

And honor it is. It implies great sacrifice, but that is willingly made. Honor that does not cost something is not worth having. No one wants it. What an honor for a youth or maiden to be called by the Sovereign of the world to associate with Him in His great undertaking! Of course it costs. That is what makes it glorious. To be allowed to do something or suffer something for the Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth!

Under the eyes of Napoleon his soldiers fought, each man as though he were ten. It was glory enough for them to know that he saw them. And if they were wounded, how proud they were to be wounded for him! And if perchance they could show him an injured arm or leg, what exultation was theirs if they received a word or a smile from the great commander!

Napoleon's glory vanished as quickly as it came. Like a cloud it caught for a moment the rays of the sun and shone with dazzling brilliance, only to lose all its splendor by a little movement of the air. Napoleon at St. Helena was as pitiable a spectacle as this world has seen. Yet for this man millions suffered and bled.

But there is a Great Commander whose glory shall not depart, a Commander who sees and understands every soldier in His army, a Commander who knows how to reward not only every deed but every effort made in His behalf. What a glory to be called by this Commander to an appointment at His side. It may mean more fighting, more wounds, more hardships, but what are all these if He sees us, if His voice cheers us, if He is our companion!

That is the religious vocation,—working with Christ and for Christ, glad to endure for His sake who endured for ours, proud to be of His intimate associates and to receive the same treatment ac-

corded to Him. Oh, yes, the religious life implies sacrifice, it entails hardships, but had it a thousand times more, it would still be the noblest career on earth for those called to it. For a creature to aid the Creator! The wonder is not that man heeds the call, but that God deigns to call.

Religious vocation does indeed demand sacrifice, the greatest sacrifice on earth. But to him who answers the call, it confers more than it exacts. "Blessed is he whom thou hast chosen and taken to thee; he shall dwell in thy courts" (Ps. lxiv, 5).

[1] In a forthcoming book entitled "Convent Life," Fr. Scott will treat the matter of vocation in its various aspects.

CHAPTER IX

INDULGENCES

ONE of the things about which even Catholics have at times hazy notions is indulgences. The early Christians knew all about them, and so did the Christian world at large up to the time of the Reformation. Then a flood of misrepresentation was let loose on all things Catholic, and particularly on the doctrine of indulgences. From that time on, so many charges and counter-charges have been made that Catholics for the most part have been content with gaining indulgences, without bothering anything more about them, realizing that the Church, God's voice, was directing them.

If you ask any Catholic what an indulgence is, he will say with the Cathechism, it is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin after the guilt has been remitted. And that is an indulgence in a nutshell. That is enough to know. It is better to live in God's grace than to be able to define it.

Also, if you ask a Catholic if an indulgence does not encourage one to sin, he will tell you of course

not, because you can never gain an indulgence while you are in sin. The two main things about an indulgence, therefore, are that it is a substitution of a milder for a severer form of penance, and that there can be no indulgence for a sin whose guilt is not remitted.

An indulgence always presupposes repentance, and a disposition on the part of the sinner to atone for his wrong-doing. It is a remission by the authority of the Church, outside of confession, of the temporal punishment due to sin in purgatory. It affords the sinner the opportunity of satisfying in this life for his transgressions which have been forgiven, instead of suffering for them in purgatory.

An indulgence substitutes a milder for a severer punishment. For instance, in former days, a man was bidden to remain in the vestibule of the church instead of entering the church proper. This penance might last for a month, or a year, or seven years, or a longer time. Another penance might be, in those days, to fast two days a week for a year or longer. And so on.

An indulgence would mean showing leniency or indulgence to a penitent who manifested good will and sincere sorrow. Consequently the bishop might change the above penances into one of a milder character, say to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of the apostles or martyrs. As a substitute for a very severe penance, say one that would last

a lifetime, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem might be assigned.

Or, again, in the times of persecution, some of the faithful would be martyred, some would be in prison awaiting martyrdom, others would be led to martyrdom and left for dead and afterwards revive; others would have their eyes plucked out or their arms or legs cut off, and so on. Out of consideration for the satisfactory merits in the superabundant sufferings of these living martyrs, on their petition indulgence was shown to penitent sinners. This indulgence took the form of doing, instead of the canonical penance, some act of kindness for the relatives of the martyrs or building a tomb over their relics, or making a pilgrimage to their altars, or doing some act of piety and charity.

In every case it presupposed that the guilt of the sin had been remitted, and that the sinner was truly desirous of reform. No indulgence can be gained except under these conditions. Having said this much of the character of an indulgence, let us look at the matter as regards the power of the Church and the practise of the faithful.

Christ said of His Church: "He who hears you, hears me." And to show that He meant just that, He also said: "Whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xviii, 18). Note the word "whatsoever." It means whatsoever things would prevent from

entering heaven, whether guilt or debt of punishment.

For Catholics who know that the Church received power to remit the guilt even of mortal sin and the debt of eternal punishment due to it, there is no difficulty in believing that the Church received power to remit the debts of temporal punishments that would hinder from entering heaven.

From the very days of Christ, the Church understood that she represented Him on earth, that she was His ambassador. "Behold I am with you all days to the end of the world." "He who hears you, hears me." St. Paul in the name of Christ pardoned a sinner who had been excommunicated on account of heinous sins. Excommunication was a temporal punishment for sin, it was something apart from the guilt and the eternal consequences.

The same Church to which Christ gave the pardoning power also received the lesser power of dispensing from the temporal punishment, as in the case of St. Paul. For our Lord not only said, "Whose sins you shall forgive are forgiven them," but also, "Whatsoever you loose shall be loosed."

When a man sins he offends God. God has declared that the guilt of sin deprives one of entering heaven. In confession, the priest's absolution removes that guilt and the eternal penalty, and restores the man to his right to heaven. Now when

God thus forgives and restores, He does not always let the sinner go without chastisement. A sin, even though it be forgiven, may be punished either in this world or the next.

We see this in the case of David. God forgave him his great sin by the absolution pronounced by the Prophet, but also declared by the mouth of the same Prophet that his punishment was to be the loss of his beloved child. The sin was forgiven, there was no question about that. Then the punishment was added.

That is why, after you confess and receive absolution, the priest gives you a penance. If the sin is great, the penance will be severe; if the sin is little, the penance may be small. The priest does not know just what temporal punishment God exacts for your sin, but he assigns what he deems a fitting penance.

In addition to the penance of confession, God may punish you in various ways for your transgressions. It may be by illness, or sorrow, or misfortune, or in any of a thousand ways here, or by purgatory hereafter. That is why it is always advisable to do works of penance of your own accord, so that God may accept them instead of the punishments He would otherwise inflict.

Now it is with these punishments due after the sin has been forgiven that an indulgence has to do. Suppose your sin is one that in the early days of

the Church would receive a penance of a week, a month, or a year, or many years. An indulgence means that by doing some pious deed assigned by the Church, you are released from the same purgatorial sufferings that those former canonical penances satisfied for, according to the indulgence gained.

The Church calls it an indulgence of seven days, or seven years, or a plenary indulgence, because she speaks in terms of those early canonical penances.

You can gain an indulgence, or many of them, without going to confession at all, if the Church so ordains, but always the guilt of sin must have been remitted. That being so, by gaining indulgences granted by the Church, you can satisfy for your sins, and you can help your friends departed from this life by offering up the indulgence for them.

That is the meaning of applying indulgences to others. It means that God, in His mercy and to encourage our kind thought of others, deigns to let us pay their debts, at least to a greater or less extent. This is the meaning of that beautiful doctrine, the communion of saints, by which I help you and you help me, when either of us is beyond self-help.

You see now what a beautiful and helpful thing is this doctrine of indulgences, as indeed is every

doctrine of the Church when you understand it rightly. If you are asked by a non-Catholic what an indulgence is, your reply will be that it is an act by which our indulgent mother, the Church, on seeing the good will of a repentant sinner, changes in God's name the ordinary punishment of sin into an act of religion.

In this way, the chastisement becomes, instead of a mere punishment, a help for us to draw nearer to God.

The Church does this by the authority committed to her by Christ, and by supplying for the sinner's punishment by the superabundant sufferings of Christ and the saints. In an indulgence, the performance of the required acts is only a condition of the remission of the temporal punishments still due.

The efficient cause of this remission is the Church's authoritative application to a soul of the superabundant satisfactory merits in the sufferings of Christ, the Blessed Mother and the saints.

In considering indulgences, we may say a word about the various kinds, but just in passing.

A plenary indulgence means that by gaining it you satisfy fully for your sin, that is, no matter what temporal punishment your sin would ordinarily incur in purgatory, it is liquidated by the performance of what is prescribed to gain the plenary indulgence. To gain a plenary indulgence re-

quires exact fulfilment of the conditions prescribed.

A partial indulgence means that part of the punishment due to sin is remitted by gaining the partial indulgence.

It is well to try to gain all the indulgences possible, because we never know whether or not our dispositions are such that the indulgence is gained in its entirety. Moreover, by constantly doing the good works which the indulgence requires, we are growing in holiness and charity. And if we ourselves have no shortcomings to satisfy for (and who has not), we may offer the indulgence for the welfare of others, a fine act of charity.

Holy Scripture tells us that mercy is above all God's works. By the power of indulgences granted to His Church, He gives us evidence of this wonderful mercy. It is for us to thank Him and to profit by His goodness to gain for ourselves and for those in purgatory all the indulgences possible.

In this way we may succeed in going straight to God after life is over, and also help many another to enjoy the bliss of heaven sooner than God's justice would otherwise permit.

CHAPTER X

PURGATORY

HOW many of us die without stain of sin? Yet only such may enter heaven! And the rest of us? Thank God there is a purgatory! Purgatory is the place where souls are purified after death by suffering for a time punishments due for mortal or venial sins whose guilt has been remitted.

To understand the doctrine of purgatory aright, we must know that sin is twofold, mortal and venial. Also we should understand that after the guilt of sin is remitted by repentance and absolution, there may remain a chastisement for sin.

When the guilt of mortal sin is remitted, it means that our eternal inheritance, forfeited by that sin, is restored. By the remission of the guilt of mortal sin, we regain our title to be the children of God and to eternal life. But although this title is restored to us by the remission of the guilt of sin, there may remain the temporal punishment due to transgressions of God's law.

For example, a man may receive a serious wound from pistol or sword. By the skill and

attention of the surgeon, the wound is kept from being fatal, the man's life is saved. But, although the fatality is removed, there may remain certain temporary effects of the wound, weakness, pain, incapacity, etc.

It is so with sin. By the instrumentality of God's grace and the sacraments, the wound of the soul inflicted by mortal sin is healed, but there may remain certain effects or penalties afterwards. These temporal consequences of sin may be satisfied for by patience, penance and prayer, etc., here, or by purgatorial punishment hereafter. Of course God may remit guilt and chastisement together, but ordinarily He does not, as in the case of David's sin.

Some people commit grievous sin and never make any atonement for it here except the confessional penance. That penance is assigned by the priest in hopes that if properly performed with the rightful dispositions, it may satisfy God for the transgressions committed. But it may not entirely do so. Unless our sacramental penance is supplemented by good works and penances of our own, we may have to satisfy for sin hereafter.

Furthermore, there are lesser sins which we call venial, and which we often overlook or fail to have contrition for. These venial sins do not kill the soul, that is, they do not destroy our title to eternal life with God, but they tarnish the soul, make it

torpid in well-doing, and in various ways do hurt to it. If one dies with venial sins on one's soul, they must be removed before the soul's entrance into heaven, for nothing defiled can enter there.

Purgatory, therefore, is the place assigned by God for the satisfying of the temporal punishment due to sin, after the guilt has been remitted.

Any one who has had experience of life must realize that some people consider mortal sin lightly, and venial sin as a trifle. But sin is so serious that to atone for it, Christ died on the cross. If that does not show the dreadfulness of sin, it is not God's fault, but the sinner's. Moreover, during life God is in various ways calling the sinner to repentance. If the call is not heeded here, the chastisements of the next world will be the consequence.

God, who freely and eagerly seeks to forgive the repentant sinner, is ever standing at the gate of the heart, and knocking and crying out so as to actuate the sinner to complete repentance and consequent forgiveness. But some go on and on, hardening their hearts against God's appeal. Nevertheless, God's mercy is so great that while there is life there is hope, and it may be that only on his death-bed does the sinner repent.

Even so, God receives him and forgives him if he is truly sorry; but, as the time of doing penance is about at an end, the chastisement will be meted

out to his soul in purgatory, unless by some miracle of grace, the sinner has satisfied the temporal debt of sin by extraordinary intensity of contrition and love of God, or by gaining a plenary indulgence fully.

Without the doctrine of purgatory, the death-bed conversion would in many cases be very hard to reconcile with the justice of God. But with purgatory, we may feel sure that those who die in the right sentiments will be saved, even though it be by a prolonged purgatory.

God's mercy is furthermore shown by His allowing us to pray for the souls of our dear ones in purgatory and assuring us that we can help them. Although not yet with the blessed in heaven, they are friends of God. They died in His grace and are but awaiting purification to enter into His glory. They are, as it were, at the gates of heaven, which will not be opened to them until there is no spot or stain on their baptismal robe.

By the Communion of Saints, they are a part of the mystical Body of Christ, His Church, and as in a body one part can help another, so we may help them. By our prayers and good deeds offered for them, we may hasten the opening of the gates. And the blessed thing is, that, while so helping them, we are sanctifying ourselves.

Purgatory, therefore, in God's design not only purifies the souls detained there, but also helps

sanctify the living by the performance of goodly works for the faithful departed. How wonderful are the ways of God! When we see His dispensations aright, they show how truly He is our Father in Heaven.

CHAPTER XI

VENERATION OF SAINTS

ALMOST every home in the United States has a picture of George Washington. And why? It reminds them of the man. Could they not recall the man without this reminder? They could. Would they? Perhaps some would occasionally. Many, very many, would not at all or but very seldom. When we look upon the picture of Washington we think of himself. His life reminds us of the struggles our infant country made for its existence. It tells us of the sacrifices he made for his native land and ours, and it makes us value patriotism.

We venerate Washington because he was faithful to the duties assigned him by Congress, because he was upright in his dealings with his countrymen, and because he labored so much and sacrificed so much for the nation's life. There may have been thousands of men just as patriotic as he, but of his patriotism there was open and manifest evidence. He was distinguished in the service of his country, and in consequence is now distinguished in the

honor paid him by a grateful people and confirmed by an appreciative government.

We honor him by statues, by pictures, by a special day dedicated to his memory, by orations, by organizations named after him, and by cities and states that glory in being called by his name. The government encourages all this, and sets us the example by naming the capital of the country after the Father of His Country.

And why all this? Because men understand that patriotism is nourished on noble deeds and by noble examples. Moreover, the government would show that she knows how to reward those who live for her.

There is a kingdom among men called by God Himself the Kingdom of God. It has its heroes like other realms. It has its subjects like other governments. It has its service and its struggles like other kingdoms. Men and women have distinguished themselves in its service, they have given an example of devotion to its cause, and they have laid down their lives that it might carry on its service of devotion to mankind.

Should it not honor them? If we venerate Washington, should we not venerate Paul and Augustine and Bernard and Francis and Dominic and Gregory and Ignatius and Xavier? These were heroes of the cross. Is not the cross worthy to stand alongside the eagle or the Stars and Stripes?

The saints are the heroes of Christianity, the oldest and most extensive kingdom in the world.

The kingdoms of this earth honor their noble sons in the best way they are capable of. Every mark of honor they can bestow on those whom they wish to honor is gladly conferrred on them. And the Church of God does likewise. Her power of honoring goes farther than that of the rulers of this world, and so does the honor she bestows go beyond what man can bestow.

All very well, I hear a non-Catholic rejoin, but why should the saints, who are after all but mortals, receive honor which belongs to divinity? Why should we pray to the saints, and ask them to grant us favors, when that is God's province? The Catholic cult, you contend, puts the creature in the place of the Creator. It is paying honor to a servant which belongs to the Master.

My dear man, whoever you be that think thus, I should agree with you if what you say were Catholic belief. If the Catholic veneration of the saints is what you declare it to be, we Catholics would be the first to reject it. If the veneration of the saints were not also the veneration of God, we should proclaim it idolatry.

But does the honor we pay to Washington or Lincoln detract from the honor we owe our country? Rather, does not our veneration of those distinguished sons of the Republic show our vener-

ation for the Republic itself? Can you imagine a man dishonoring the name or statue of Washington without also dishonoring the country he served so well?

On the contrary, can we not measure the patriotism of our people by the esteem in which they hold their notable patriots? In our schools we inculcate the study of their lives. In our cities we decorate their monuments. In our armies we salute their standards. And who would dare say that in thus honoring our heroes we are dishonoring our mother country!

The saints are the heroes of God. They won their crown by living for Him, laboring for Him, dying for Him. He welcomed them after life's warfare by bestowing on them the crown of immortality and adopting them into the divine family. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life" (James i, 12). "They are equal to the angels and are the children of God" (Luke xx, 36).

Does a father of a family gain or lose honor by the honor and esteem paid his children? Do you know of any greater pleasure you can give a father or mother than to praise their children? The saints are the children of God. Not as we on earth who are on probation. They have stood the test of divinity and have been approved.

They are the gold tried in the fire and found to be pure gold, fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is said that the eagle before it acknowledges its young as genuine holds them with their eyes looking full at the sun, and if they cannot gaze on it, drops them to destruction. The saints have looked upon the Sun of Justice during life and guided their steps by Him and molded their lives by His pattern, and now they are the children of God. As the Apostle puts it, they are "sharers of the divine nature." In honoring them, we are honoring those whom God has honored. He sets us the example.

Moreover, in honoring the saints, we are honoring God indirectly, for it is His gifts in them that we honor. All they are and have they received from Him. Their sanctification is the fruit of His grace. Now would you feel that you were detracting from an artist by praising and honoring his work?

Just the reverse. If you want to pay the highest compliment to an architect, enthuse over the building he has erected. If you want to honor an author, inform him that you place his book on the most honored shelf in your library. If you wish to honor God, venerate His workmanship, the living temples of triumphant grace, the saints.

However, I hear you remark, there is another side which you ignore altogether. There cer-

tainly can be no objections to the veneration of the saints as you describe it, but you Catholics put the saints in God's place. You go to them instead of to God; you ask them favors as though they and not God were the bestowers of gifts.

I grant that if you judge some Catholics by their way of speaking, you are right in making this statement. For they say: "I am going to ask St. Anthony for this favor, or St. Joseph for that." But this is only a way of expressing themselves. What they have in mind is that they are going to ask the intercession of St. Anthony or St. Joseph.

You do the same daily. If you want a favor from a railroad or an express company, or from a bank, you say: "I am going to ask so-and-so for it." But so-and-so is only an official, a servant, a secretary. He has no power except what he receives from higher up. What favor he does, whatever he dispenses, is only what the railroad or express company or bank authorizes him to do. And when you seek this favor, you know it is not something of his own the man is giving you, but only his good will in the matter.

Ah, but that is just it. Why should we require anybody's good will where God is concerned? We do not. We can go direct to God if we wish. There is nothing to prevent it. But most people find it easier to approach majesty through the friends of majesty. If you have offended a great

personage, you certainly feel more comfortable in approaching him to ask pardon or get a favor if you are accompanied by his mother or close friend.

Moreover, suppose that God, in order to honor His saints, tells us to go to them. If you want a favor from the President of the United States and he tells you to see Senator So-and-so, by whom he distributes that patronage, you cannot say that by going to that Senator you are overlooking or underestimating the Chief Executive.

Now God has distinctly commanded us to go to the saints for favors and for help. "My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends; go to my servant Job, and he shall pray for you, his face I will accept. So they did as the Lord had spoken to them, and the Lord accepted the face of Job" (Job xlii, 8).

If God heard the prayers of His saints on earth, how much more will He harken to those offered Him by the saints above! "When thou didst pray with tears I offered thy prayer to the Lord" (Tob. xii, 12). Thus Raphael addressed Tobias. "Pray for one another, for the continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (James v, 16).

The saints are the just who have entered into their glory. In order to encourage us here below by holding up for our imitation men like ourselves who have fought the good fight and won, God is pleased to have us helped by them. By going to

them we recall that they were once as we now are, and the very act of praying to them for aid is a stimulus to our imitation of them.

God knows our frame. He made us. He gave us the saints for help because He wanted to give us the best help. He considers them a channel for His graces. For that is all they are after all, as regards their veneration,—a way to Him. He as truly gives by them as if He gave directly Himself.

For when it comes to prayer, why should we pray at all, for that matter? Does not God know what we need? Why then pray to Him, why inform Him of what He knows? It is because prayer shows our dependence upon Him, that what He gives us is not our due but His bounty, and it reminds us of Him and our duty. And so in His dispensations in regard to the saints. He could hear and grant us without them, and He often does, but He wants us to go to them in order that we may be thereby helped and the saints honored.

The Our Father is a prayer direct to God Himself, and we are bidden to say it daily. In directing her children to seek the intercession of the saints, the Church does not at all suggest that we should neglect God or show lack of confidence in Him. Experience shows that the Church which fosters the intercession of the saints is the only one in which prayer to God Himself is paramount.

It is safe to say that there is no religion in the world in which there is so much prayer to God as in the Catholic faith. Praying to the saints reminds us of God, that is why.

The saints reign with Christ. "To him that shall overcome, I shall give to sit with me on my throne" (Apoc. iii, 21). And what does reigning with Christ mean? Just what the intercession of the saints implies. With Christ, as His friends, they are powerful. They never so truly reign as when they help us. Their one desire is to glorify their Lord by aiding us to be with Him one day.

In dispensing God's favors they are exercising their function of reigning with Him. When we go to them we give them the opportunity of exercising their power. In that they are honored, by that we are helped. That is the practise of the communion of saints, the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints."

We know from history that in rejecting the saints, it was but a short step to the rejection of Christ. Catholics think too much of Christ to belittle His friends. The saints are the friends, tried and true, of Jesus Christ. In honoring them in the way He wants us to we are honoring Himself. The more we honor the saints, the surer are we of eventually being with them in the home of Our Father in heaven.

CHAPTER XII

THE DONATION OF MONEY IN REGARD TO THE MASS

EVERY Catholic knows that sacred things are beyond all money valuation. The holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most sacred of all things. How is it then that the priest is given money to say Mass? That is a thing which non-Catholics frequently do not understand. Catholics themselves sometimes fail to know how to explain this matter satisfactorily. It will not be amiss, then, to look into it.

Nowadays there is very great interest in things Catholic, due to the marvelous achievements of the Church in Belgium and France. The whole world is beginning to see a great light, a light that was always shining, but whose rays were distorted by prejudice or ignorance or worldliness. The World War has cleared the atmosphere and shown things as they are.

Among these is the Church and her work. Like her founder Christ, who loved the light, she shows true under the strongest light. The world crisis is X-raying almost everything, and by it the Cath-

olic Church, the Bride of Christ, stands out divine. People are seeing this more and more every day. The tributes paid to the Catholic clergy and laity by a press which before was for the most part not friendly, show that the fruits of Catholic doctrine and practise have evoked the admiration of observing and thinking people.

We Catholics should be ready to help those seeking the truth. When asked about our Faith and its practises, we should regard it as a duty to be able to explain them. Failing that, we should at least know what books deal with the matter and be ready to refer inquirers to them.

I may say to any Catholic who feels unable or timid about expounding his religion that he can always discharge his duty by referring an inquirer to that monumental work, which is now in nearly every library and consequently within the reach of everybody, the Catholic Encyclopedia. It is a storehouse of information on almost every matter which touches the Catholic religion.

And now to return to our subject. How is it that money is given to a priest who says Mass if money is not allowed to be given for the Mass?

Suppose you receive a visit from a king who is passing by your estate and you send an escort to meet him and incur various other expenses for things which propriety demands, would it be right to say that you were paying the king for his visit?

By no means. Not all the money you possess could buy that favor. But if the favor were graciously bestowed, your sense of duty would impel you to give gladly of your substance to obtain the presence of those persons, and to have the things whose instrumentality was necessary for the reception of the honor.

It is so with the Mass. The Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary. In a mystical but very real way, the Victim who died on the cross is slain on the altar. By that same power by which water was changed into wine at Cana, the host and the wine in the priest's hands are changed at the words of consecration in the Mass into the body and blood of Christ to be consumed under the form and appearances of bread and wine in the communion. Christ was really slain on the cross where His soul with His blood was separated from His body.

The same Christ offers His body and blood as the Victim on our altar where there is not indeed real death but mystic death, mystic shedding of His blood, applying to us the graces merited on Calvary. That is why the Mass is so sacred to Catholics. It is the realization that they are present at the mystic death of Christ, "the Lamb as it were slain," and that they join with the priest in offering the infinite Victim to the Eternal Father.

The Mass would be impossible without the

priest. No one except him who has received ordination to pronounce the words of transubstantiation can celebrate Mass and call down from heaven the Son of God, to be offered as a propitiation for us sin-stained mortals.

Now the Mass is a ceremony. It calls for a priest and it requires preparation, time, exertion and other things. It is as a token of appreciation for this service on the part of the priest that the offering is made when he is requested to say Mass for a special person and for a special intention.

For every Mass has a special as well as a general efficacy. The general efficacy is that which all those present at the Mass may share in. The special efficacy is the particular benefit for which the priest petitions God by the offering of the august Victim. The priest is at liberty to specify this particular object of the Mass, the primal intention of the holy Sacrifice. Each one who attends Mass may offer it up for his own special intention, whatever that may be, but there is a special efficacy from the intention of the celebrant of the Mass.

When a person asks to have a Mass said for himself, the priest understands that the petitioner wants him to say a special Mass, and for a particular intention. It is a request that the priest say a Mass on a day he is not obliged to, and for a special intention not his own. It means that he sets

aside all other duties and considerations for that particular hour and ministration.

If an offering is made to the priest, it is merely for that accommodation, not for the intrinsic merit of the Mass itself, which is beyond all value. The offering given to the priest is a free-will donation. No priest, I believe, will ever refuse to say Mass for a person who requests it but has no offering to make. In point of fact, many priests refuse to take an offering from those who can ill afford it. They are glad to say Mass gratis for the poor.

But generally the poorer people are, the more insistent are they that the offering be accepted. I remember being called to the Rectory parlor on one occasion when a poor woman in rags and tears stood before me and offered me a donation to say Mass for her wayward boy. I said to her:

"My child, it is I that should be helping you instead of receiving anything from you. Go in peace, I shall say Mass for your intention tomorrow."

And then came a noble response, which only the Catholic heart could utter:

"Indeed, Father, why should not I make a sacrifice as well as my Saviour; if I don't add my mite, I won't feel that I am doing my part."

"God blesss you," I said, "you have the right spirit."

I took her offering, but the next day she re-

ceived a visit from a kindly lady, and when I saw her again, she was not in rags.

Now, of course, the Mass has its value and merit independently of what the priest is, or of what sacrifice a person may make in union with the holy Sacrifice. But the merit of the Mass, although incalculable, may not be accepted by Almighty God in its entirety.

One Mass, if its full value were accepted, would obtain all the petitions that the whole world could offer. But God, who accepts the Mass as the most pleasing thing to Him from this earth, does not oblige Himself to apply it according to our specifications. The Mass is offered to Him by way of petition, that, in view of the divine Victim, He may grant our request.

But He, for very good reasons, may see fit not to accede to our petitions in the way and to the extent of our prayer. However, although He may not satisfy our prayer in our own way and measure, we know for certain that we have offered Him the most acceptable inducement to have Him grant our petitions.

But God regards many things when considering our petitions. He looks to our conduct as well as to our wishes, to our souls as well as our bodies, to eternity as well as to time. He does not leave us the Mass as a means of satisfying off-hand our obligations to Himself and to our fellow man.

The Mass is not intended as a substitute for our shortcomings nor as an easy remedy for the evil we may do.

True, it has infinite value if God chooses to accept it fully on our behalf, but He does not necessarily do so. This we know from the liturgy of the Church, which would not establish anniversary Masses for the faithful departed if one Mass was accepted at its infinite value. For a single Mass accepted at its full value would more than suffice, no matter what satisfaction would be called for.

We do not know just what effect the offering of a Mass for our intention may produce, but we do know that, all things considered, it is the most efficacious means we can employ to placate God and to win His favor. If the Mass were accepted in its infinitude, a thief, or vicious man, or murderer, could almost defy God by having Mass offered as satisfaction for crime. But, although God will forgive the thief or murderer who repents, He may nevertheless punish him by a long purgatory.

God is just. Either here or hereafter He chastises those who do evil. Even though He forgives them so as to restore them to His grace and to their title to eternal salvation, He nevertheless punishes them for their misdeeds. Persons who make a death-bed conversion are indeed saved from eternal loss, but their entrance into heaven

may be only after long chastisement in purgatory. If God chose to accept in their behalf one Mass in its infinitude, it would more than suffice for all their chastisement, and they would enter heaven immediately.

But Mass is a prayer, a petition, not a command. It supplicates God, but does not oblige Him. That is why we say the Mass is offered by way of suffrage. It might happen that a wealthy malefactor would leave thousands of dollars as a foundation for Masses to be said for his soul, and yet a poor woman who had but one Mass said for the repose of her soul might receive more benefit from her one Mass than he from his thousand.

If that malefactor died repentant, he would surely save his soul, but after what chastisement only God knows. Every Mass said for him would benefit him and bring him sooner to heaven, but how much no one could say.

The offering of a Mass, therefore, does not put a premium on careless living, as some outside the Church declare. It is not an encouragement to go ahead and sin. It does not mean that it is a cloak for iniquity. But it does mean that it is the offering from each individual which for himself, all things considered, is the best thing he can give to God to obtain what he petitions from Him.

Wrong-doing might be encouraged if a person

could transgress at will and feel sure that guilt and penalty would be canceled by having the Mass said. Moreover, thrift and foresight would be abandoned and a premium put on idleness if, by having a Mass said, it would obtain what honest labor must achieve.

No, God does not furnish us with inducements to sin or sloth, but He does supplement our sincere efforts. By the Mass, more than by any other thing in the world, He gives us a means of obtaining His forgiveness, favor and benefits. We must do everything as though all depended on ourselves, and yet have recourse to God, realizing that of ourselves we are nothing.

Prayer, almsdeeds and every good work should go hand in hand with our efforts, but of all things given us by God to help ourselves and others, the Mass is the most efficacious. God may not accept it from us in its infinitude, but we may be assured that it will do more for us than any other thing conceivable, all things considered.

The Good Thief received abundantly of the Sacrifice of Calvary,—that very day he was in Paradise with his Lord. But God may not always apply so abundantly the blood of the Victim of the Cross. That is why we have not only one, but many Masses said for the repose of the souls of our dear departed. That is why we so frequently attend Mass or have Masses offered for some spe-

cial intention, for health, occupation, peace, etc.

God hears and answers every prayer, much more every Mass, but with due regard to our spiritual and eternal welfare and His all-wise dispensations. We must remember that prayer, whether it be the Rosary, the Litany, the Stations of the Cross, or the Mass, is not a command but a petition. By it we acknowledge God's overlordship and our dependence upon Him. It is true He has promised to grant our petitions, but, as He says, when made in the name of Jesus. Jesus means salvation. Accordingly God regards all our prayers with a view to our salvation.

Often a refusal of what we ask is a granting superabundantly of what is implied in our petition, for no one should want God to give anything that would interfere with eternal blessedness.

The Mass is the supreme sacrifice and petition of man to God. Nothing else approaches it. We should attend Mass not only on Sunday, when we are obliged to, but also on other days when we can do so. If attending Mass occasions a sacrifice of time or pleasure on our part, how pleased we should be to add our sacrifice to Christ's.

So also if, in having Masses said, we deprive ourselves of comfort or pleasure in order to make an offering to the priest, we should be happy to add our sacrifice to that which he offers for us by the Mass. The money is not for the Mass, but

to help support the minister of the altar, without whom the Mass could not be offered.

It is an acknowledgment on your part also that he is doing something for you especially, something outside his regular parochial duties. Moreover, it implies that the first or most especial intention of the Mass is given to you.

God, who sees all things, knows just how much you do for Him. He knows what you deprive yourself of in order to have the Mass said, as an offering to Him, and you may be sure that He will not be outdone in generosity. Money typifies time, labor, pleasure, comfort and everything else precious to man. When we give our money to the cause of religion, it signifies in God's sight our time, labor, privation and good will.

God does not need us nor our possessions. But what He does want is our hearts. We give Him our heart when we give Him what it costs us an effort to part with. When we regard the matter in this light, we can readily see that it is an honor for us to give of our substance to the Lord by giving to those who minister unto Him. In no other sense does a Catholic view the matter of money in connection with religion.

St. Paul is our authority that they who serve the altar should live by the altar. The priest leaves off all other occupations in order to be at the service of the people. If the people do not support

him, how shall he maintain his ministry? One way of fulfilling this duty is that by which the faithful make a special offering to the priest who, in a special way, serves them by saying the Mass at their special request and for their special intention.

How happy we shall be when we see God face to face to realize that we personally were instrumental in giving to God the offering of His only beloved Son by the Mass which we frequently had offered, even at a sacrifice to ourselves! Next to the dignity of the priest who offers the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is that of the person who is instrumental in having it offered.

From all this we see how truly sublime and helpful is our holy religion. It establishes a direct connection between ourselves and God. We can be constantly in touch with the divine. That is why in the battle of life the follower of Christ is so well equipped. A Catholic never feels alone. He realizes that God is with him in joy and sorrow, in success or failure, in life and in death.

And so he lives on earth, but not for this earth. He is going home, to the home of his Father in heaven. Life is but the path to that life which never ends. With Christ as our companion, helping us to bear the yoke, we shall walk cheerfully along the way of life, knowing that it will bring us in the end to share in God's own everlasting happiness.

CHAPTER XIII

VIRTUE WITHOUT RELIGION

HOW often do we hear a man say: "Oh, I can be good without any religion," or again, "I know some people who are loaded down with religion, but they don't pay their debts." Perhaps you have also heard this: "Well, if so-and-so does not believe in religion, I am willing to take my chances, for he is the best man I know of, and religion does not seem to worry him much."

But suppose that, because some business men are absolutely reliable, you would say that legal contracts are not necessary! Because some men do not lie, would you say that any man who presents a check at a bank should have it honored without recognition? If an occasional man rises to eminence without education, would you say that you did not see the need of education?

Now, in point of fact, even with religion, how many do we see leading evil lives? Abolish religion, and you would have vice everywhere. If with our doctors and medicines so many fail to be

in sound health, what would be the case without physicians and remedies?

An exception only proves the rule. The fact that a religious man does not live virtuously attracts your attention because you expect religion and virtue to go together. If a man with no religion is good and honest you are surprised because you know that even with religion it is hard to be good. Religion puts before a man the highest and best motives that can affect human nature. If a man fails to be influenced by religion, he will not be influenced by anything.

How then is it that we do find men and women who are good and have no creed? First of all, how do we know they are good? A good man is one who is faithful and true to his duty regardless of temptation.

You can never tell if a man is honest unless he is tempted to be dishonest. Some people are so constituted or situated that the inducement to steal never affects them. You cannot tell if a man is brave unless he is called on to face danger. Some people go on for years without an occasion for testing their bravery. You cannot tell if a man is pure unless he is tempted to impurity.

Some people happen to be so constituted by nature or so favored by congenial surroundings that the lure of lust never draws them into the by-paths of vice. But what illustrates the point bet-

ter, perhaps, is the matter of drink. One man may never feel a tendency to go to excess in liquor. But another may have to fight that tendency continually.

Now virtue means standing firm against temptation. A child of three has no vices, but you would not call him virtuous. A maiden dwelling in a luxurious home with everything she wants for the asking has no temptation to steal. But how about the girl who lives in a tenement, earns four dollars a week, out of which she must pay her car-fare, dress neatly and buy her lunch, if you can call the bite she gets by that name? Hungry and scantily clothed, the temptation for her to take something that does not belong to her is almost irresistible. And what a host of other temptations assail her! Temptations which a well-to-do girl never knows or fancies.

The thing to keep in mind is that no two persons are tempted alike. Your dominant temptation is not mine. What troubles me most does not worry you. And so on. Now before you can say a man is good, you must know how he faces evil, how he acts under temptation. And there are some evils, and the worst at that, which are not seen. The vilest sins that can blacken the soul of man are precisely those which are not open to observation.

If men with religion and the great help God gives by the sacraments nevertheless often yield

to evil, what must be the lives of those men who know no aid and have no restraint! They are pagans and they have the vices of pagans, and we know what those vices were. And we know also that when Greece and Rome were most civilized and most highly respectable, they were rotten through and through with vices which eventually exterminated them.

No doubt if a traveler happened in Rome at that period he would notice a high grade of respectability. Externally everything would show culture. The men and women in society would do everything in good form. Only the initiated would see what happened at some of their exclusive functions. Only the participants and their retainers would know the mass of corruption often covered over by civic and social glamor.

And so it is to-day. Things are going on in some high places which by comparison would make the unfortunates in our slums seem like archangels. Respectability is not virtue nor is vulgarity vice.

And this is just where the judgment of men fails. Sometimes they see a man of respectability and consider him a good man. Or perhaps they observe a vulgar creature and mentally label him sinful. But a man may be dirty or shabby or ill-mannered, and yet he would not deliberately do wrong. Tempt him to steal and he will answer you with a blow. Speak to him of defiling an-

other's home and he will knock you down. Yet these are the sins that cry to heaven for vengeance.

If you could but see the ill-gotten wealth sometimes obtained by high finance and put it alongside the loot procured by common theft, it would look like a toy baby-carriage alongside an automobile. Yet the ill-gotten wealth of such a financier may make the possessor a man of influence in the community, but the paltry loot of the thief makes him an outlaw.

We can catch a thief breaking into a house, but we cannot catch the financier twisting in and out through the intricacies of the law. But the theft is worse in the latter case because it calls for cool, persevering calculation, and it has the audacity to characterize its crimes as ability and cleverness, and to term the result of its wickedness success.

And take the other matter which it is fashionable to call the social evil. What a world of camouflage there is in regard to it! It parades as indignant virtue if a poor fallen girl of the street comes in view. While indulging all kinds of sexual vices it nevertheless frowns upon a poor fellow who drinks a glass of beer at a bar or who curses at a team of horses. Not that drunkenness and cursing are not bad, but, alongside the vices of some of those who frown on them they stand out as virtues.

But you are drifting, I hear you say. Not at

all, as you will see. I started out to consider how it is that men with no religion are nevertheless good men. And I think I have shown you that, apart from some of the smaller vices which show externally, we cannot always say who is good and who is not; that respectability can sometimes go hand in hand with vileness; and that certain vulgarities are frequently consistent with true virtue.

Please do not misunderstand me. I do not mean to put a premium on coarseness. I should be the very last person to show any encouragement to impropriety, or to detract any from the value of respectability. By all means let us do all in our power to have people gentlemanly and to eradicate bad manners. But facts are facts. We must see things as they are, and value them, not by their label, but by their contents.

"Very well," you say, "but I know men who pay their debts, who owe no man a dollar, whose word is their bond, but they do not go to church. Now give me a man like that, and it is virtue enough for me." You know you do not mean that. Suppose a man stood high in the business world, paid all his obligations and did so promptly, but that he was false to his marriage vows. Would you say he was a good man? Or suppose a man was a perfect husband and father and stood for the highest standard of domestic virtue, but was quietly

looting a bank in which you were a director! Would you call him a good man?

It is all deception. And the worst of it is people are deceiving themselves. But you cannot deceive God. And He is the one after all who is going to say who is good and who is bad. And if He established a religion to help man be good, He knew it was necessary.

And events show it even here below. When in the history of the world was there such widespread irreligion? And when before, since the dawn of Christianity, was there such evil among men?

We do not trust a man's honesty. See all the devices in railroads, shops, offices, *and in schools,* to keep watch on employees. It was not that way before the Reformation, which is the mother of to-day's irreligion. And look at the matter of chastity, which is one of the best gages of virtue. Consider the army of detectives who find employment watching the morality of some distinguished, wealthy and respectable husbands and wives.

Look at the flagrant indecency in some of our leading restaurants and popular theaters, and you will know why censors are appointed to keep the contamination somewhat within bounds. It looks as though when men undertook to do without the Ten Commandments, they are forced to make a poor substitute of their own.

In the schoolroom, in the press, in the conduct of business, what has it all come to but this: "Get all you can, but do not get caught." Venality everywhere! Consider the conditions prevalent in city politics, in big businesses and sometimes even in the press.

Look at France, where a great man, a learned man, an honorable man, who tried to drive religion out of his country because it was not patriotic, is now on trial for treason! And the good religious whom he hounded and exiled are now giving their lives for the country he is accused of betraying!

But when all is said, it still remains that there are some people who seem to be good without any religious practise. You meet an occasional man who, to all appearances, is good, pure and honest and who never goes to church. We must remember that there is a natural morality in every man. Some people seem to be naturally good.

Well, thank God for that, and would that there were more! But I have had occasion to know intimately some of these "just naturally good" people, and I should not care to go before Almighty God with their account. God has a sort of an X-ray way of looking at us through and through. That is the inspection we should live for. That is the inspection His religion prepares us for. That is why He established His religion.

Can a man be good without religion? Evidently God does not think so, for He does nothing in vain, and He paid too great a price on Calvary for something that was not necessary. At the same time we must remember that a man may be deeply religious without manifesting it. God alone is the judge of who is good and who is not, of who is actuated by religion and who is not. But religion of some kind must animate a man if he is to resist his evil inclinations and avoid sin. We are referring to those who boast that religion does not count, that they can be all that they should be without any religion at all.

And since respectability, as the world regards it, is often taken for virtue, and as respectability sometimes goes hand in hand with irreligion, we have endeavored to show that virtue is something different from culture and respectability.

Some of the most virtuous people in the world adorn high society. Wealth and respectability number many saints in their ranks. But they are virtuous not because of their prosperity or culture, but because they live by God's law and by His grace. Virtue is as hard for the refined and educated as for the simple and vulgar. No class can do without religion, if it is to be virtuous.

Whenever it appears that virtue flourishes without religion it is because we can not see the soul and what actuates it. But religion of some kind

there must be if man is to stand against temptation and overcome it. We are all tempted. We must all show whether we are with God or against Him.

CHAPTER XIV

THE UNBAPTIZED AND SALVATION

I SUPPOSE there is not a father or mother in all Christendom who has not been disturbed by the thought of the unbaptized. For parents love the offspring that is yet unborn, and what if the child should not be born alive and receive baptism? Others who are not parents are concerned about the non-baptized in pagan lands, and also at home.

It certainly makes people think seriously, this matter of baptism, and in some cases it keeps people from being members of the true Church. The thought that God does not give everybody an opportunity in such a vital affair as eternal salvation engenders in some the idea of unfairness on God's part; and, since God cannot be unfair, there is the tendency by them not to believe in the Church which holds the doctrine of baptism. So it is worth while looking into this subject.

God is not unfair. He cannot be unfair. Any religion which makes Him unfair cannot be His. The first thing every creature needs to realize is that the Creator is infinitely good. That comes

before all else. His power, His knowledge, His wisdom, are secondary as regards us. The great thing in our regard is that He is goodness itself.

Next we must realize that He has shown His goodness by the best of all ways, by His love for us. That is the test. God so loved the world as to give His only Son. That was the greatest gift possible, His own divine Son. The only Son, Jesus Christ, so loved the world as to give His life for it. No greater proof could be asked or given. God is good and He loves us. That is the A B C of religion. Anything that goes against that you can reject.

God is the maker of man, as He is of all other creatures. He gave to man a body and soul and a destiny. It was a glorious destiny. But God did more for man than that. He did not stop at giving man all that human nature was capable of. In the very beginning He elevated human nature into participation with the divine. He added to man's endowment a quality which was altogether a favor on His part, by which man could share in the divine nature.

This favor or grace of God was a free gift of God to a nature which, even without this grace, would be most richly endowed, in fact as highly endowed as human nature of itself could be.

The grace which God conferred on human nature, by which it became a participator of the

divine, was a distinct and unmerited favor. It was something our nature did not require for its perfection, something it had no claim to, something entirely a gracious favor conferred by the Creator, by which mankind was made more like unto God and capable of sharing His blessedness. It was a proof of God's unbounded goodness and of His love for man. That fact stands out.

In view of that we must interpret all God's dealings with us. When a child has real proof of its mother's love, it knows how to interpret rightly all that the mother does in its regard. No matter how apparently at odds with affection certain things may seem, the child instinctively knows that they are done in love and for its welfare.

No mother ever gave proof of love for her child so great as God has given for us. Let that be the key to the various dealings of the Creator with mankind. But God, besides being a God of love, is also a God of wisdom and power. He is infinite. That signifies everything. He gave us our mothers and put into their hearts the wondrous love a mother has for her child.

No mother ever loved her child as God loves you and me. That is certain. It admits of no question. In the light, therefore, of God's infinite love and wisdom we can trust Him to do what is right by us. Not only that, but what is most loving and beneficial.

And now to return to the matter we began with. How are we to reconcile a good and loving God with the doctrine which teaches that unbaptized infants shall not enter the kingdom of heaven? How regard that otherwise than as unfair to them? It looks as though God did not give them a chance, and that does not seem fair. So much for the statement of the difficulty. Now for its consideration.

If we could see God's plans as we shall when we are sharers of His divinity in heaven, everything would be clear to us at a glance. Not only clear, but we should realize that in everything He showed the most wonderful love and wisdom. Now, however, we see faintly as through a dense medium. In a mist at sea, the skipper sometimes mistakes a ship for an iceberg.

Realizing our limitations, therefore, let us examine the designs of God humbly and reverently. A common soldier is not qualified to pass judgment on the measures of his commander-in-chief. We are but as babes before the Almighty. He who gave us our reason and all we have has a right to our submission to his enactments. The man who does not regard God and His ways thus does not rightly know his place. The man who does not trust to God's love and wisdom has not the first qualification for future association with Him.

That is why God Himself says unless you enter the kingdom of heaven as little children you shall not enter. The child trusts and loves its parents. We must trust and love God and be convinced that what He has determined on is right and just and best. There is no faith without that.

The objection is made that God is not fair in excluding unbaptized infants from heaven because He gives them no chance. Would you say God was unfair because He made you a man instead of an angel? What is the destiny of the unbaptized infant? It is the very next thing to that of the angels in heaven.

The angels and saints share the life of God. The unbaptized infants share all of God's enjoyments except heaven. They will have for all eternity everything that Adam and Eve would have had in case God had not elevated the nature of our first parents to participation with His own. All the joy and bliss that human nature is capable of by itself will be the inheritance of the unbaptized infants.

Original sin deprived Adam and Eve of their supernatural or heavenly destiny. The Redemption restored that. Baptism applies the Redemption to the individual, destroys original sin, and restores to man his heavenly title, making him an adopted child of God.

As the unbaptized infants do not receive back their inheritance lost by original sin, they suffer

that loss. That is the pain of loss which we call the consequence of original sin.

When we say that this unbaptized infant endures a penalty or is punished, we mean it in that sense. No pain is inflicted. The word pain is used to denote the deprivation of an enjoyment that would have been its share if it had received back its inheritance to heaven. But next to heaven, the unbaptized infants have everything that God can bestow on His creatures.

Now suppose Adam and Eve had not been raised to a higher destiny but, being created perfect man and woman, were placed in the Garden of Paradise to live there, with everything in the world they could desire! Would you say that God was unfair for giving them that? Yet like unto that is the career of the unbaptized infants.

They have everything except heaven. Their life forever will be in a Paradise where they will have all the natural enjoyments our first parents would have had in the Garden of Paradise. There are no joys of earth now comparable to those of that Paradise. And similar to that is the abode of the unbaptized infants. That is their limbo, or dwelling place, a most perfect Paradise, everything short of heaven itself.

Now we know some people on earth who like it so much that with all its drawbacks they say this life is their heaven. Do they consider God unfair

for giving them this heaven on earth? Of course they change their mind when trials come, as come they do to all. Who ever saw an old person who considered earth heaven and would care to live life over again? But in youth, with beauty and love and luxury, this world seems very heavenly. And at that period some people barter heaven for the joys of earth.

Well now, suppose you take the happiest career ever lived on earth, a career full of bliss and health and love and good fortune. If you saw a person who had such a career, would he not say: "Oh, how good God is to me!" That, only much more and better, is the career of the unbaptized infants. They have everything this world at its best can give, and more.

Of course, you may object that heaven is better. So an angel may object that he is not an archangel. A saint may object that he is not a seraph. Every woman may object because she is not the Blessed Virgin. Eight of the nine choirs of angels may object that they are not on top. And so on.

That is not the point. The point is that an angel should be very grateful for being an angel and thank God for His goodness. A man should thank God that he can be a saint, even though man is a little lower than the angels. And next to the blessed in heaven are the unbaptized infants.

Now is God unfair to the unbaptized infants

to give them that wonderful blessedness forever? If you say so, you must say that He is unfair to the monkey for not giving him a chance to become a man; unfair to a frog for not making it a bird; unfair to the tree for not making it a deer; unfair to the stone for not making it a bush.

God gives everything to the unbaptized infant that human nature of itself can crave or receive. To the baptized He adds of His own accord something human nature is not entitled to, participation with His own divinity. This adoption is a free gift of God, and in bestowing it on some, He does no injustice to others.

In order that you may know that this is the teaching of the Church, I quote from St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest theologian of Christianity: "The souls of children who die without baptism are not deprived of a natural happiness such as according to its nature is due; but they do lack that supernatural happiness which we have by virtue of faith. The souls of infants, ignorant of the fact that they are deprived of so great a good, feel no pain because of this privation, and possess in peace all that is proper to their nature" (Quaest. De Malo, V-a. 3).

God is good, essentially good. If we are good, as we should be, we are sure to know all things some day. In our desire to search the ways of the Almighty, we should not forget that He is our

Judge as well as Creator. His laws are of more concern to us than His unsearchable designs. Some people forget to be good, and worry themselves about God's goodness. God is able to take care of Himself. In the right time He will justify His ways.

Meanwhile let our first concern be to live as He ordains. For we are adults. God will not treat us as He has the unbaptized infants. On them He conferred immeasurable natural happiness without their doing anything to merit it. It was a free gift on His part. But to those who have attained to the use of reason, His dispensation is different.

To all who have reached the years of discretion, He says: "All you who receive me, I give the power to become my children. If you reject me, I will cast you off forever. If you receive me, you must do so not merely by word, but by deed. You must keep my commandments." The commandments are God's will expressed to His human creatures. He leaves them free because He made them so. Their salvation depends on their own efforts, aided by His grace. They must do their part.

This brings us to the question of adult salvation. God wishes the salvation of all. Since this is so, He gives to every man the means of salvation. Baptism is the general means appointed by God

for admission into His kingdom. There is sacramental baptism and the baptism of desire.

The Church teaches that a man, be he a pagan or a savage, if he follow the dictates of conscience and does good and avoids evil, will receive from God an internal inspiration to do what is necessary in order to be saved. A savage in the heart of Africa, if he follow the light of the natural law, will receive from God the grace of salvation.

In just what way this is done in each individual case we do not know. But it is Catholic doctrine that no one is lost except by his own fault. God gives to every man the light necessary to direct him to eternal life, and unless man himself rejects that light and its guidance, he will be saved.

To substantiate this, I give the pronouncement made to the whole world by the saintly Pontiff, Pius IX, in his allocution dated August 10, 1863:

"You know, my most dear children and venerable brothers, that those who, being individually ignorant of our holy religion, observe the natural law and precepts that God has engraven on the heart of every man, and who are disposed to obey God and live virtuously and righteously, can by the aid of divine light and grace obtain eternal life; since God, who searches the heart, who sees clearly and knows the sentiments, the thoughts, and the dispositions of all, cannot in His supreme mercy

and goodness by any means permit that even one soul should be eternally punished that has not separated itself from Him by voluntary mortal sin."

That is Catholic teaching, that is Catholic faith. It tells us that God gives every man not only a chance, but a good chance. It shows us that God is just and good. He is also infinite, and, in consequence, mysterious to us finite beings.

Let us not try to understand all His ways. We shall not succeed. If He wanted us to know more, He would have declared it. But He does not. Not yet. Let us who are Catholics, who belong visibly to the living Church of God, be grateful to Him.

The Church is the direct channel of His grace. It is the sure means of salvation. Others grope in uncertainty. We have God's own guidance. We have His sacraments to nourish us, His priests to minister unto us, His voice to direct our every step aright. We do not have to pray: "Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom," as did the great Newman in search for the truth. The truth is the inheritance of Catholics and the truth will lead us securely to our eternal inheritance.

But we must live the truth. It is not enough to admit it or proclaim it. The majesty of God is infinite. His laws are sacred. He will not allow His authority to be despised. No matter how

good He is, He wants our obedience and reverence. Our government at Washington is good, it exists for the welfare of the people, but it will not tolerate the violation of its laws. It must be respected. Almighty God, the Ruler of mankind, although infinitely good, will not tolerate trifling with His mandates.

He gives His light and grace to every man. To every human being, He gives all that is necessary to be happy for all eternity. It is each one's duty to cooperate with the grace received and to leave others to God and His justice and mercy. It will little benefit us to be solicitous on God's account if we are neglectful of our own. He will not ask us to stand judgment on His ways, but upon ours.

CHAPTER XV

INTOLERANCE

INTOLERANCE is a bad-sounding word. We dislike intolerant people. We resent intolerant measures. Intolerance and ignorance go hand in hand. The more enlightened a man is the less intolerant he is apt to be. For the more we know of men and things, the more we realize that there are two or more sides to most matters.

If you have listened to a good debate, you may be convinced that the first speaker is right on hearing his side, but when the second speaker takes the opposite side, you may rather incline towards his position. Then comes the rebuttal, and you may not know where you are. Both sides seem so convincing that the issue is left to the judges of the debate, and even they may be divided. But a majority opinion is given as the verdict.

Intolerance, as understood ordinarily, is narrowness or stubbornness. It does harm, for it stirs up in the average fair man a spirit of revolt and resentment. For the sort of intolerance that

sees narrowly and takes but its own view we can have nothing but contempt and condemnation.

There are certain things in life, however, about which there are not and cannot be two sides. Mathematics, for instance, compels intolerance. You are obliged to hold exactly and rigidly to one view there. There are no concessions or compromises possible in regard to addition, subtraction and multiplication. No matter how tenaciously a mathematician held to his fundamentals, you would not say he was intolerant.

The chemist must be intolerant on the laws of action and reaction of the chemical affinities. Any concession would destroy the value of the science. So also must a lawyer be intolerant as regards decisions of the Supreme Court. Those pronouncements are fixed and definite while they are in the Statute Books. There are no two views on a matter thus by law settled until they are reversed.

A lawyer who was guided in his practise by those decrees would be considered wise, not intolerant. And if, by any chance, presuming on his great learning and wisdom, he should call these decrees into question, the judge would order him to consult the code and cease useless talk.

So there is a good side to intolerance, as there is to many other things. Some people are intolerant in regard to intolerance. No one was ever more wise or prudent or learned than Jesus Christ,

yet in some matters He was the most intolerant person in the world.

On anything that touched justice, truth or the honor of His heavenly Father or the welfare of mankind, He was absolutely uncompromising, most thoroughly intolerant. Once a thing was right or true, He was the very incarnation of intolerance. He allowed no opinion to stand against what He declared to be the truth. Indeed, He was so intolerant in this respect that no one but a divine person could presume to be so absolutely certain and uncompromising.

Now once Jesus Christ has set His seal on a thing it is not intolerant to be intolerant of anything contrary to it. Christ is God. He establishes truth as certainly as nature establishes chemical affinities. Nature cannot be gainsaid; neither can Christ. Christ is the Truth. Either that or nothing, or worse. How any Christian can be considered intolerant for upholding what Christ taught is a mystery.

I can understand that a person may have two views on Christ, or refuse to accept Him, but how one of His followers, believing in His Godship, could be considered intolerant for being consistent is beyond comprehension.

However, it may be objected that the intolerance complained of is not the intolerance of belief, but of the imposition of that belief on others.

Does not the United States government impose her Supreme Court decisions on the entire people? If the truth is worth while proclaiming, is it not worth while upholding? And how can the truth be upheld except by being intolerant of what is opposed to it?

Still, it may be further objected that it is well enough to uphold the truth, but not individual conception of it. To this we reply that Christianity has never had any individual conception. The martyrs did not die for their own opinion or beliefs, but for those of the Church. It was their act of faith in the Church established by Christ and guaranteed by Him to teach the truth.

What is said so far seems incontrovertible, it may be said, but there is another phase of intolerance and the one which gives rise to all the trouble about it. That is the forcing of her doctrine by the Church on those over whom she has no jurisdiction. It may be all right for an American court to hold her lawyers to the statutes of the United States, but she has no right to force that code on the English or the French. And that is just the intolerance of the Catholic Church, which acts as though it had the monopoly of truth.

Very well said. However, consider that the Church of Christ was not made for Italy or France or England, but for the whole world. Her commission was received from the Ruler of nations.

She was charged to teach *all* nations. The world is her field. She has the truth of God and the commission from God to teach it to all peoples.

That is her mission, and in carrying it out, she is doing what God has ordered. But she does it in God's way. When Christ was on earth He expounded the truth, showed His divine character, and appealed to men by reason and authority. He never compelled belief. And that is the Church's way.

If that is so, you reply, how about the Inquisition? To understand and rightly estimate the Inquisition, you must be conversant with the conditions and spirit of the ages when it operated. Society in those days was so bound up with faith that any attack on religion was a menace to society. A heretic in the ages of faith was regarded as an anarchist is looked upon now.

Heresy was the crime of treason. In the annals of the period it is classified with high treason against the State. King Peter of Aragon declared that "the enemies of Christianity are the enemies of our kingdom and should be dealt with as such."

In the time of the Reformation, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin regarded opinions opposed to theirs as treason and punished it as such. They were inconsistent, for they believed in private judgment, but, inconsistent or not, they show how they looked upon what they called heresy. Their theologian

Zanchi, in a lecture at the University of Heidelberg, said: "There can be no doubt about it, and all learned and right minded men acknowledge it, that the authorities may pronounce a sentence of death on heretics."

If the originators of a new religion held heresy as treason and punishable as such, should we be surprised that the faith which came from the apostles and was interwoven with European society should detest and punish what it regarded as high treason? Heresy at that period was anarchy. It threatened society in its very foundation and was legislated against accordingly. It was a time when Europe was in a theological ferment, and the Church, like a careful mother, was safeguarding her children.

That was the purpose of the Inquisition. It was not to force Christianity on unbelievers, not to propagate the religion of Christ by violence, but to safeguard the faith in those who had it. The Church was like a mother protecting the inheritance of her little ones.

Faith was dominant at that period. Rulers and people realized that it was God's absolute truth, that it was the word of God. There was nothing subjective about it. It was the reality of realities. For it the martyrs gave their lives by millions. For it the Crusaders went to far-off Palestine and fought and died. It was a sacred

thing, a very sacred thing. It was worth guarding if it was worth believing. If men laid down their lives for it, they would not tolerate its disintegration. And that is what heresy sought to do, to break up the faith of the Cross.

James Gairdner, a non-Catholic and a leading authority on historical documents, thus confirms what we have declared: "The essence of heresy was not erroneous thinking, for all men are liable to that, but arrogance tending to contempt of the decisions of learned councils and the most approved judgments of the ancient fathers.

"The Church offered no obstacle to thoughtful inquiry by which her tenets might be carefully tested, explained or developed; but she did not love rough treatment of things sacred by men ill qualified to handle them. It is this state of matters which we now find it so difficult to realize" ("Lollardy and the Reformation," I, 157).

If there had been no Inquisition there might now be no Christianity. It was the way of meeting a danger at that particular time. The Church will last forever,—that we know, but not without the instrumentality of men. The Inquisition, for its day, was the instrument employed. For the time, it was the proper method. It was sanctioned by society, government and the Church.

There were abuses and excesses, no doubt. The Church is human as well as divine, and the

human element at times shows. But the divine element shows still more, for in spite of the defects and abuses which would wreck any other organization, the Church continues on with renewed life, in spite of the wounds inflicted by human frailty.

The Inquisition was a disciplinary institution. If it had ten times its abuses it would not affect the doctrine of the Church, but merely her practical procedure. And God has not guaranteed His Church against mistakes of management. However, He has guaranteed that, no matter what her mistakes in business and policy may be, she shall always proclaim the truth and shall last forever.

But was not the Church intolerant by the Inquisition? Is our government now intolerant by her secret service? If our government, to preserve our national life, takes precautions to know who are her enemies and punish them, is she intolerant? Would Washington be doing its duty if it allowed a demagogue to stand in a public square and assail our laws and Constitution?

In the great World War we are now engaged in, our government is not considered intolerant because it stops sedition. Heresy was sedition in the Church. It was treason against society as then constituted. The Inquisition was solicitude, not intolerance.

Intolerance there was in individuals, and in cer-

tain countries and at certain times. But these were the excesses of solicitude. Governments also used the Inquisition as a tool, and designing politicians, under the guise of zeal, did dark deeds of confiscation and blood.

But the best institutions on earth would have to be abolished if you condemned them because of abuses. How about our courts, without which the country would be chaos? Have not some of our judges or juries been corrupt? But, abolish our judiciary, and a flood of dissension would soon obliterate justice and freedom.

The Inquisition was a stern measure for a ravaging plague. But it was in itself no more intolerant than the health legislation which saves the people from stalking death.

In our colonial days, our forefathers left England because of the intolerance which forbade them the practise of their religion in the home country. Colonies of expatriated men and women were established in our free land. Driven out by intolerance, you would expect tolerance from them in their new home. But New England became as intolerant as old England. One colony in America stood out as an asylum for the persecuted, regardless of creed. That one colony was Catholic Maryland.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CLERGYMAN AS MAN AND AS PRIEST

SOMETIMES you hear a man say: "If I do not go to church, it is the fault of Father So-and-so; he would drive religion out of any one." Or perhaps you have heard something like this: "I would never go to confession to such and such a priest." Again, you may have met people who said: "If the priest was what he ought to be we would never have to apologize for the Church." And so on.

Also you may have heard remarks like the following: "If all the priests were like Father B——, how proud we should be of them!" "Oh, I do wish a Protestant friend of mine could meet Father C——." "Do you know, I took Mr. So-and-so to church last Sunday; he, you know, is a Protestant and thinks all priests are like that poor little man he met last fall at St. Blasius Church. But he was so wonderfully impressed Sunday by Father F——. The sermon was excellent. After mass we ran into Father F—— and he was so perfectly priestly that my friend said to me aft-

erwards: 'Why, he is different; I never met a finer man!' " And so it goes.

All of which tells us what, of course, we did not know before,—that the priest is really human. Ordination does not change him from a man into an angel. Yes, but you would suppose, I hear you say, that his high calling would make him different from ordinary men. And it does.

Taken as a body, the priesthood is in a class by itself. If you took all the priests of the world and put them alongside the same number of men from other walks of life, you would see the vast difference in favor of the priests. Even as men, apart from the priesthood, this superiority would be evident.

A priest, as you know, must face long years of study and discipline. Then, after ordination, he must be ready to go to any place and take up any duty assigned him. His life cuts him off from the associations which human nature most craves. The affection of wife and children, the joys and comfort of family life,—all these are renounced by him.

His life for the most part is solitary. Duty calls him to the bedside of the dying, to the haunts of crime, to the squalor of the poor and to the sorrows of the afflicted. His life is one round of service for others. His reward is a very meager salary on which he can just subsist. This is the

lot of the average priest, this is what he faces when he says farewell to the world and joins the standard of Christ's special service.

Some priests fare better than those described above, others fare much worse. Priests in the poor sections of big cities or in thinly populated country places endure positive privations year in and year out. Those who go to the missions meet with labors, privations and dangers hardly known to any other class of people. All this sacrifice tends to make a priest heroic.

A remarkable confirmation of this is furnished by the heroism displayed by the priests of France in the World War. The infidel French government ordered the clergy to the trenches to humiliate and injure the Church. After protesting that their sacred calling was to heal the souls of men and not to mangle their bodies, they were commanded to take their place in the ranks as ordinary soldiers.

And what was the result? By their bravery, intelligence and sacrifice they became notable men. The other soldiers looked up to them. When duty which implied danger and tact was to be done, the soldier priests were often the ones assigned to it.

When volunteers were called for an undertaking that meant almost certain death, the soldier priests came forward and offered themselves. As a re-

sult, the men of France began to realize that their priesthood was heroic. Recently the French government awarded the honors won so far during the war, and the highest percentage was conferred on the priests.

The greatest tribute to manliness that has ever been paid was that given recently to the priests of a Religious Order fighting in the trenches. Ninety-three per cent. were decorated. Think of that, ninety-three out of every one hundred signalized themselves by deeds of courage and patriotism which won from a hostile government the badge of military distinction. Never in the history of the world has that record been paralleled.

There must be something in the priestly vocation which fosters the heroic, or you would never get such a manifestation of heroism as that.

But we do not need to go to the French for instances of priestly heroism. In our own country, if there is contagion, fire or accident, you always read of the priest ministering to the stricken ones no matter how great the danger to himself. It would be easy to compile a book of heroic deeds by priests in almost every diocese of the Catholic Church.

With these remarks on the priesthood as a body, considering them just as men, I may now come back to the matter with which this chapter began.

In the priesthood you will find here and there

a man who is not worthy of his position. Priests are human like the rest of mankind, and everything human is liable to defect and deterioration. The priesthood embraces every temperament and every character that you find in any walk of life. Things which are quite excusable or palliated in other careers are severely condemned in the priesthood.

This is in itself a splendid tribute to the clergy, for it shows the high standard set for them. Now should we be surprised if here and there a priest falls short of his requirements? What does it signify but that the individual priest has been false to his colors?

Just as a Catholic layman may be a scandal to Catholicity, so a priest may be a scandal to the priesthood. If you see a bad Catholic, do you condemn the Catholic religion? Christ Himself warned us of this very thing when He said: "Scandals must come, but woe to them by whom they come." Every year you read of this lawyer or that being disbarred from the law on account of conduct unworthy the profession. But that does not keep you from educating your son for the law if that is his choice. You know that the law is an honorable profession.

However, I can fancy you saying that you are not surprised at a black sheep in ordinary folds, but that in the ecclesiastical you are distinctly

shocked at finding such. A priest is supposed to be a model man, he preaches to others, he has the grace of God guaranteed him, and his very calling demands that he be holy.

But a priest has every bit of his human nature just as you have, and unless he is on his guard constantly, he may fall from his high estate as easily as you may fall from yours. God who guarantees His priestly grace does not oblige cooperation with it. And just as you may fail to cooperate with grace and fail as a Catholic man, so he may fail to cooperate and fail as a priest.

As God gives you, a layman, every grace and help to be a good Catholic, so He gives the priest every grace and help to be a good priest. But as you may fail, so may he. But there is this difference. You fail, and no one observes it or remarks it. But let a priest fail, and immediately it causes a shock. And, as I said above, this is really a compliment to the priesthood, for it shows that you are accustomed to exemplary conduct in priests, and any delinquency among them draws your attention and makes you wonder.

However, some one may say, it is not downright evil in priests that a person may complain of, but of unpriestly conduct. And I say, how about your own conduct as a Christian gentleman? It is as hard for a priest to be priestly as it is for a layman to be an exemplary Catholic. I venture

to say that the percentage of edifying priests is much higher than the percentage of edifying Catholic laymen. Yet both have the same obligation, —you to be a good Catholic and he to be a good priest.

But you will say: "You are missing the point. What we mean is that priests ought to be more careful, more considerate. See how haughty they are at times and independent and pompous." Well, if a man is by nature that way, I suppose it will stick to him as a priest. These are defects. In every walk of life you find the same.

And this brings us to the second part of my subject, the clergyman considered as a priest. Now just as you, as a layman, may be cranky and overbearing and selfish and inconsiderate, and yet be a good Catholic who would die rather than break one of God's commandments or those of the Church, so a priest may have his shortcomings and yet be a very good priest. The just man may fall seven times,—and yet he is a just man.

Of course we deprecate defects in the clergy. The priest himself hates his own shortcomings. They form the matter of his frequent confessions, but, like his skin, they stick to him. That is because life is a battle, not only without but within. We all agree, and especially priests themselves, that the better man a priest is the better priest he is. And priests also realize that their defects

are often drawbacks in their ministry. Immense harm is done and much good left undone by a priest who is not what he should be. But leaving all that now, let us look at the clergyman as a priest.

Regardless of his individuality, the priest is the ambassador of God. We know what an ambassador is. A man may be a true and capable ambassador and yet be deficient in many things. If he is duly accredited and sent on his mission, his personality, while it may help him in many ways or hinder him, does not affect his official position. The documents he signs, the business he transacts, are just as validly done as if he had all the virtues of the most esteemed statesman.

In the transaction of business, his personality and tact and other good qualities play a big part, and for that reason he is carefully chosen. But if he turns out to be a disappointment, his official acts stand just the same.

And it is so with the priesthood. The Church orders greater care in choosing her priests than does any organization on earth. And after choosing them, she continues that care in training them and in safeguarding them.

However, if in spite of all she does, a priest develops later on defects which did not show earlier, she can but regret the defects. But the priestly character is there and remains forever.

If he is a bad priest, that is his misfortune and the Church's. For it truly is a misfortune to the Church if one of her priests is in any way below the standard she sets for her clergy.

Everything in a priest which detracts from his priestly influence is a drawback to the work of the Church. This should be and is an incentive to priests to be all that their high calling demands. Every quality which makes a man respected and influential among his fellow men will in a priest aid him in his lofty mission. And every defect which alienates man from man will in a priest interfere with his holy work.

For although Catholics recognize the priestly character in every priest, no matter if he be unworthy, they will, nevertheless, seek out ordinarily the priest who is the right kind.

In this way, a priest who is not considerate, who is not careful of the proprieties of life, who is not kind and patient, will soon find that he is let severely alone. People will go to him only when they cannot help it. But they always recognize his priestly position. They know that whether they like him and his ways or not, he is the representative of God, and that in administering the sacraments he does so just as validly as the pope.

However, thank God, the Catholic laity is rightly proud of its clergy. The most honored men in the community frequently are the clergy.

A priest who is not loved and honored is a rare exception, and has brought it on himself.

For the Catholic, the priest stands in the place of Christ. And to the credit of the priest it must be said that, like Christ, he goes about doing good to all. That is his life. He has given up home and family and love to be unencumbered in his work for his fellow man. All that man values most he has renounced for the sake of Christ and for service in His vineyard.

And men at large appreciate this life of sacrifice. They see in the priest a man who is not as other men. And when the priest is true to his high mission, he has an influence which no other can exert. Catholics love their priests, they venerate them. And the priests on their part strive to justify this devotion of the people towards them. The priest's life is a hard life, a solitary life. No one can be a good priest without prayer and meditation and much self-conquest.

While we should all look for the highest qualities in our priests, we should also endeavor to cooperate with them in their work for their flocks. In that way we give the good priest the one great consolation of his life, which is to bring to the great Good Shepherd a goodly flock of sheep.

Like Him who laid down His life for His sheep, they are giving their lives for those entrusted to them.

For two thousand years this shepherding has been going on, and despite the waywardness of the flocks and the occasional shortcomings of the shepherds, the fold is now extended all over the world. No matter how scattered nor how many they may be, they all hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd at Rome. And it will go on thus until the whole world enters within the fold, and there will be one fold and one Shepherd.

CHAPTER XVII

CHURCH-GOERS WHO DO HARM

PERHAPS I can best show what I mean by church-goers who do harm by relating an occurrence I met with while a chaplain in a hospital. A man was dying. The nurse asked him if he was a Catholic. He replied he was once.

"Do you want to see a priest?" she said.

"No," he snapped.

The nurse, thinking he did not realize his condition, continued:

"If you were very ill, in fact, if you thought you might possibly die, would you care to have a priest?"

"No."

The next time I was passing through the ward, the nurse said to me:

"Father, there is a man dying in bed No. 17 and he is a Catholic, but I guess you will find him a pretty tough customer."

I was used to tough customers, so I approached the bed.

"Good day, my man," I began, very kindly.

Just a nod for a reply.

"I am a priest and I have come to see you," I added, gently.

"I don't want to see you," he said, and turned his head aside.

Now I knew I had a tough customer.

"My child," I persisted quietly, "do you realize that you are a very sick man; in fact, you are dangerously ill? You are put on the list of those whom the priest should see before it may be too late."

"If I want you, I will send for you," he replied.

Thinking that he was disturbed over something and that he did not realize his nearness to death, I said to him plainly:

"My child, you are dangerously ill, you may not have long to live. Now begin your confession."

So saying, I put on my stole, and gave him the blessing prior to confession. To my amazement, he said:

"Now, Father, I know you mean well, but I don't want any of this stuff. I have seen enough of religion, and I don't want any of it. I have seen people who go to church and come home to quarrel and backbite and cheat and behave worse than those who stay at home. I am willing to take my chance without your services. Good-by, and let me alone."

I took out my crucifix and held it before him and said:

"It is our Lord who is coming to you; I am merely His messenger. Do you want to turn away the Lord?"

For an answer, he made a gesture with his hand for me to go. I was sorry to leave him, but I realized that our Lord Himself had to leave some people. The Son of God Himself let the Scribes and Pharisees go their way after He had done His part.

Before I take up the subject on which this man based his rejection of religion, I may as well narrate how the matter ended. At four o'clock the next morning, a man was brought into the hospital who had been struck and badly injured by an automobile. He was too terribly cut and broken to be operated on, his life being a matter of hours only. He was a Catholic and was placed in a bed adjoining my friend above. Although awfully injured, the man was conscious, and as he asked for the priest, they sent for me at that unseasonable hour. I knew that a call at such an hour was urgent, so I got to the patient with all haste. When he saw me, he groaned out these words:

"O Father, I have been praying to live until I should see you; now I don't care when I go."

I heard his confession and administered the last

rites. He died half an hour later. Meanwhile, my tough customer in bed No. 17 was keenly observing. As I was leaving the ward, I stopped at his bed, and said:

"The Lord has come to you again; do you wish to turn Him away this time?"

Tears came to his eyes, and he said:

"Forgive me, Father, and may God forgive me!"

I stayed with him until I had administered all the sacraments of the dying. The next day he was dead.

That man was repelled from religion by church-goers who do harm. I do not say that he was justified, indeed he was not, but I am stating his own justification. He himself realized at the end that the example of bad Catholics was no reflection on their religion, but only on themselves. But he realized all that only under extraordinary conditions. The fact remains that for many years he abandoned religion because of the bad example of some church-goers.

Now, of course, no educated or reasonable person will condemn an organization for the defects of an individual. But we must remember that everybody is not educated or reasonable. And these people must be taken into account, for in every community you will find them.

Our Lord Himself seems to have had such per-

sons in mind when He distinctly warned His followers that scandals must come, but woe to them who cause them. For the present we leave to themselves those who take it out on God for what one of His creatures has done amiss. God is their judge.

Now to turn to those who go to church and yet live as though there were no church. In considering this matter, we must bear in mind several things. The first is this, that because a person who goes to church does not do right, it is no reason why he should not go. If in spite of the good influence exerted by the church he lives on carelessly and with certain faults, he would be worse without religion.

Some people doctor a good deal without getting better, but that does not mean that the doctor is at fault. Perhaps without the doctor they would be on their last legs or in the grave. Of course some doctors may not understand their patients, and may in consequence do them harm instead of good.

But the religion of Jesus Christ is that of the divine Physician who never gives wrong prescriptions. If then the Catholic church-goer returns home and cuts up, it is his own perverse nature that is to blame, and not the church. What he should do is not to discontinue going to church, but to realize that to profit by a physician's treat-

ment he must take his medicine and follow his directions.

Now the next thing to observe about these church-goers who do harm is that the things we complain of in them are not so much matters of sin as defects of disposition, which, though annoying and at times devilish, are nevertheless not serious moral transgressions. It may sound strange to say that they can behave in a devilish way and yet not seriously transgress.

Well, if you know poor old human nature, you will understand what I mean. You know that some people have a bad streak in them. Some people have several bad streaks. Of course, these are not the best people in the world, nor are they the worst. These difficult and touchy and troublesome people who sometimes make a hell for those around them would nevertheless die rather than deliberately violate one of God's grave commandments.

But is it not violating God's law to create disturbance and cut up the way some of these so-called religious people do? These disturbances are dreadful things. They do a lot of harm, I am not extenuating them a bit. But some people in their tantrums are not accountable. They get carried away by their nerves. For the time being they are like runaway horses. I have seen a horse in a runaway plunge right through a large

plate-glass window of a store and get all cut to pieces.

Some people's nerves are that way. Nervous people, and nowadays there are many such, say and do things which cause pain to themselves and others. But it is not because they are morally bad. A person may cause a lot of trouble, and yet not be deliberately guilty of wrong-doing.

Now before God it is only culpable wrong that is an offense. And wrong-doing is culpable only when it is deliberate, more or less. Some people have characteristic defects which will be theirs as long as they live. Yet they may not be sinners. The just man falls frequently during the day, yet he is just. And why? These falls are virtually unavoidable and constitute a cross for self and others.

I do not wish to excuse these unfortunate persons. My purpose is to show that they may be sincerely trying to be good, and yet, by reason of their disposition, fail. A man who does not take account of this trait in human nature may mistake the failure for sinfulness and conclude that religion has failed. Of course, only a narrow-minded and illogical man would so conclude. But we must remember that there are lots of that class.

It is the duty, therefore, of church-goers to realize that they hold the good reputation of the Church in their keeping. By their disedifying con-

duct they may do religion harm. There are many weak Catholics who are looking for an excuse to give up church, and the bad example of some church-goers furnishes them with a pretext. I said above, that, in itself, their conduct might not be sinful, but it may readily become so if they do not do their very best to avoid those faults and defects which alienate people from religion.

It is a strange thing, but true, that some people who wink at great transgressions take offense at little infractions of the home virtues. A violation of the conventionalities of society repels certain persons more than a violation of God's law. We cannot overlook this fact, and consequently, while doing all in our power to observe God's law, we should not be unmindful of the code of man.

Charity is the soul of religion. Charity implies kindness and consideration for others. If you go to church and then, on returning home, behave as you like, regardless of others, you show plainly either that you have a bad streak in you, or that religion in your case is only nominal.

The sensible man will look at it in that way. He will understand that the individual is not the Church. He will go on and faithfully attend to his religious duties, and, perhaps, say a prayer for the poor misguided soul who in reality needs prayers and pity more than anything else. For the church-goer who does not profit by the Mass

and the gospel and the general help which the Catholic service gives, is impervious to the best influences that can affect humanity.

There is nothing in this world higher or nobler than the standard held up to Catholics by their faith and practise. If they fail to approach that standard, it is their own fault and their own responsibility. To whom much is given, of him much is required. God will judge Catholics severely who harm His religion by making caricatures of it by their conduct.

There is no doubt about it, if Catholics half lived up to the holiness of their religion, very many outside the church could not hold out against conversion. But when non-Catholics see some people return from Mass and carry on as though they had come from the theater or from shopping, they judge religion accordingly. They are not justified for so judging, but that does not excuse those who, by their conduct, occasion contempt for their Church.

And so, to the church-goer who does harm I say, do not leave off going, but start right in and do what is right. Be patient, considerate, careful of truth, polite and faithful to every little duty. You are all right on the big things. I know you do not steal nor tell injurious lies nor commit sins of impurity. You avoid the sins which corrode the individual and society. Your faults are minor

ones. But an elephant can be more damaged by a few mice than by a pack of hyenas.

Bear that in mind. People do not see your heart, but only your person. And if you commit a lot of small faults they judge you by them only; at least, some people do. And in a way they are right, for they expect much from those who profess and practise the Catholic religion.

What I wish to insist on is that, while practising the great virtues, we should not neglect the small. While doing the heroic things of supernatural virtue, we should not neglect the ordinary things of natural virtue. And some people are inclined to do just that. They think that because they feel all right before God they do not need to care for man. That is wrong, very wrong, and it does religion great harm.

In conclusion, I might say that I do not know whom to pity more, the church-goer who does harm or the man who stops going to church because of the bad example of some church-goers. God is not going to judge you for what another does, but for what you yourself do or fail to do. It will do you little good before a court of justice to say you failed to keep the law because John Smith broke it. Every man must one day stand judgment on his own observance of the law of God. The eternal Judge will attend to others. You must answer for yourself.

CHAPTER XVIII

GOD'S PERMISSION OF EVIL

GOD is the Ruler of the world. He holds all creation in the hollow of His hand. Nothing can happen against His will. If there is evil in the world, therefore, is not He accountable for it?

These reflections must come to every thinking man. They must puzzle many a good man. That there is evil in the world and lots of it, and of the worst sort, is evident. Right at the start of creation, we see Cain guilty of murder. From that time on it has been murder, adultery, lying, stealing, slander and all kinds of wrong-doing. And yet God has forbidden evil under the heaviest penalties. He has thundered against it by the most solemn laws. By threats and calamities He has shown His prohibition and detestation of it.

Is He powerless therefore to prevent it? Is He a Ruler who cannot enforce His laws? If He does not want evil in the world, why does He not stop it?

About His hatred of evil there can be no doubt. He positively and solemnly condemns it. Is He

therefore helpless? "I call heaven and earth to witness this day that I have set before you *life* and *death, blessing* and *cursing*. Choose therefore life, that both thou and thy seed shall live" (Deut. xxx, 19). These words of God Himself give us the answer.

Yes, God does forbid evil. He hates it, He condemns it, He does not want it. And He could stop it. If He wanted to He could change our nature and make us bond instead of free. But He has given us free will. We are not bound to do this or that. He could force us to do right and avoid wrong. But that would be granting us freedom and denying it by the same act. That would be a contradiction.

And, as God cannot contradict Himself, He will not prevent evil by compulsion. He has made us free men, free to do or not to do, to choose between good and evil. We could not be free, we could not choose, if there were not evil as well as good. He permits the evil in order to leave us freedom of choice. But He forbids us to abuse our liberty by choosing evil.

If there were no evil in the world, there would be no virtue, for virtue means doing good and avoiding evil. But how could we avoid evil if God did not permit its existence? God therefore permits evil in order to allow man the exercise of his freedom as regards right and wrong. Were

no evil possible, there could be no conquest of virtue over vice, no noble struggle of right against wrong, no triumph of justice over iniquity. Man would be a bondsman to necessity, not a freeman with liberty of choice, for with no evil there would be no choice between right and wrong.

Man values liberty above all else. For it he will sacrifice everything and risk even life. God in giving us this greatest of gifts realized our responsibility and the danger of our abusing it, nay, even the possibility of our using it against Himself. But for His own all-wise reasons, He gave us this wonderful if dangerous endowment. He wants us to use it to serve Him, to do justice, to do good and avoid evil. But He will not force us, for to do so would be to take back what He has given. And God does not reverse Himself.

Moral evil is not something in itself, but a negation. It is a refusal on the part of man to do his duty. It is using our free will against the purposes of its Giver. This results in all sorts of disasters. Injustice, calumny, bodily disease, feuds, wars and such, are for the most part the consequence of the abuse of our free will.

Everything in creation is good in itself. Evil means using a good thing in a wrong way. For instance, morphine is a good thing in itself. When used rightly it relieves pain and saves life. No hospital could be conducted without it. But

when used wrongly, it constitutes an abuse and becomes a vice. Instead of being good, it becomes evil. But the evil is not in the morphine, but in the will of the man who uses it wrongly.

Evil is a negative thing, the lack of conforming to God's prescribed way of acting; but, for displaying His goodness and for giving to mortals opportunities of practising the noblest virtues, God permits it. By allowing us liberty of choice, by permitting evil, God shows us His marvelous patience.

See how at times He endures the transgressions of sinners for years and years, patiently bearing with them, warning and entreating them to be converted and live. And when they turn away from evil, behold how His mercy is poured out upon them, restoring them to His friendship. See His love for the sinner by what He suffered in order to redeem him from the consequences of evil.

Finally, consider how His justice is glorified if, after love and patience and forgiveness, the sinner still goes on defying Him. For after death, the judgment, when God will justify all His ways and deal rigorously with those who abused their liberty instead of using it as He directed.

In the parable, Christ forbade the cockle to be uprooted, lest the good seed should also be plucked up with it. "An enemy hath done this," He said,

when the cockle was reported to Him. You see He disclaims responsibility for the cockle. It was an enemy act. The sinner, perverting the use of his free will, is the enemy, the cause of the evil that is done. And Christ said: "Let both grow up until the harvest."

This was the permission of evil. It was allowed that good might come of it. Not only good on the part of God by manifesting His patience, mercy, love and justice, but good also on the part of man. For in turning away from evil, the sinner triumphs over it. In combating evil, the good man is tried like gold in the fire and found worthy of companionship with God.

In praying for those who lead evil lives the pious exercise charity. The holy missioners in trying to reclaim the sinner exercise that zeal which characterized Christ Himself. Evil, then, in God's providence works out good. It enables the just man to look upon heaven as the reward of victory. It saves this world of men and women from being a mere machine.

God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things. He made all things besides man for man, but man He made for Himself. All men return to Him, either to glorify His mercy and to live by reigning with Him, or to display His justice by eternal banishment from Him whom they despised and whose laws they defied

by choosing evil. God is the best judge of whether or not the permission of evil is worth while. He sees the present and the future, He knows all things, and He has decided on the tolerance of evil.

A soldier might think that a bayonet charge was a cruel order. Bloody it might be, but the commander may see peace and victory where the soldier sees but wounds. The Commander of the world's forces knows what is best and He has a heart, for He is none other than our Father in heaven. Our heart, with all its feelings of mercy and kindness, is His handiwork. All our tender feelings come from Him. No one can give what He has not got.

In God, therefore, there is mercy and consideration beyond what we can conceive of. We may safely trust Him to know and to do what is right and best. Our part is to do what is right and to do it as best we can. That is the best way to lessen the evil which we deprecate.

No matter how we look at evil it is a mystery. Our purpose has been to show that, if it is beyond our complete understanding, it is not beyond God's wisdom who knows how to draw good from evil. One of the joys of heaven will be to see how God has done this. Man's life on earth is a warfare. God has so stated. Since, therefore, we are not confirmed in good, as the angels are, we must by

our own free will do good and avoid evil, and thus win life's battle.

Then we shall receive the reward of victory. Then shall we see face to face, not only God Himself, but all His plans. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the mind of man to conceive of the things God has prepared for them that love Him." Let us serve Him now. Afterwards we shall understand Him, and share in His blessedness forever.

CHAPTER XIX

GOD'S PERMISSION OF SUFFERING

THE ordinary person shudders at suffering. We hate to see even an animal in pain. The sight of pain in a human being is almost as bad as enduring it. Since the beginning of Christianity, every effort, personal and combined, has been made to mitigate suffering. We may say that the wonderful spirit of sympathy and relief which characterizes the world to-day shows how nature regards suffering.

And yet with so many organizations and so many individuals devoting their time and energies to relieve pain, we see also that mankind is now inflicting on mankind worse pain of mind and body than the Master of creation has ever done by famine, earthquake or pestilence.

What a mystery it is, half the world torturing the other half, and, spite of it all, an army, a countless army, of kind-hearted souls on both sides sacrificing their lives to relieve the agony inflicted by man's own doing. Is it not strange! We equip an army to destroy an enemy, and, at the

same time, equip an army of mercy to soothe the wounds we inflict!

And why this apparent anomaly? We realize that pain is at times necessary, that safety often comes through the infliction of wounds and damage. The suffering is not inflicted for the sake of suffering, but because it is the only way to stop what threatens disasters. And when the victim can no longer endanger us, our kindness goes out to relieve the pain caused by our own hand. Nations understand this, and so do individuals who think.

If a man finds it necessary in his plans of safety and development to cause suffering, can we not fancy that the Maker of man may also in His plans for our own welfare find that suffering is the best means of developing us unto the appointed design? There is a mystery about suffering. Dread it though we may, if we look back into our lives we shall find that nothing has ennobled us like suffering.

Pleasure oftentimes exhausts, enervates, makes selfish, stands in the way of duty, dethrones man from his high estate. Every one of us can bear witness to that. But sorrow oftentimes chastens, it makes us think, it halts the runaway passions.

Suffering is the portion of mankind. We are born crying, we die moaning. And between the cradle and the grave, what a gamut of affliction

the ordinary soul runs through. Does it not bear out those words spoken against our race in its infancy: "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread"?

The human race is under chastisement. Not to see it is but to add to the suffering and the mystery. Moreover, besides our original penalty, we are suffering for our own sins. Look into your own life. Do you not find that many of your sufferings have been caused directly or indirectly by your sins?

However, apart from suffering of its own causing, there is in the life of nations and individuals a great deal of affliction which seems to come without fault. This is the primal penalty of our race. It shows us that we have not here a lasting city, but seek one which is to come. It gives the lie to those who say we have our destiny here.

No, this earth is but a short stage on our journey to eternity. What matters a rough road if it leads to the palace of the King? Our Saviour, who had joy and sorrow to choose from, chose sorrow. Not that He needed the purification of pain, but as He is our Leader, who not merely commands but says: "Follow Me," He goes before enduring more than He requires of His followers.

If sufferings were not in God's providence the

best thing for us, Christ would not have chosen them. He is not only our Saviour, but our Example. "Learn of me." If He had not endured so much, how could we learn from Him when we are in suffering? But when we see Him carrying a cross before us, we can walk in His footsteps. We certainly should not expect better treatment than our Master.

Now here is where faith is such a blessed thing. When we suffer, it is not the dead weight of suffering, but suffering that raises us up to where our King is. Christ has said: "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." We know what a yoke is. It rests on two and divides the burden. Those who carry the yoke of suffering in the name of Christ have Him as companion in carrying it. That makes it light. We realize that He is near, that He suffered for us to show His love, and we desire to show Him our love by enduring something for Him.

That is why the saints rejoiced in suffering. They felt pain as much as we do. But pain, why that is nothing, if you have a motive for enduring it. Would a mother shirk pain that gives relief to her darling child? Would a soldier shirk pain that brings victory? In a foot-ball game I have seen a college boy cry because he was removed from the game, not because he was hurt, although

he was suffering in every limb, but because he was taken out of the fighting which would bring victory.

Our suffering under the leadership of Christ brings certain victory. A soldier may bleed and lose through no fault of his, but a soldier of Christ cannot lose unless he deliberately chooses to. Christ died on the cross to show us the victory of suffering. He knew that the lot of mankind is to suffer, and He sanctified it by the cross. But He did not stay on the cross. It merely led Him to His glorious destiny. For after the Crucifixion came the Resurrection,—after the cross, the crown.

In our Calvary, and every human being has one, we must not let our eyes keep fixed on the darkness of Good Friday, but look beyond and see the glory of Easter Morn. Christ, our King and Leader, rose as the Captain of a mighty army, the army of those who follow Him carrying their cross after Him. If we carry our cross as He directs in patience and faith, it will lead us to where He reigns in glory.

We have our cross whether we will or not. The more we resent it, the heavier it becomes. No man has such a heavy cross as the one who tries to go through life on the road of pleasure and sin. Vice makes our cross a dead weight. Resignation, patience, faith, make it almost lose its

weight. With the saints, it took away all weight and made the cross sweet.

For is it not sweet to endure under the eyes of our Beloved? If it is a sweet thing to die for our country, how much sweeter to die for our heavenly home and for Christ, who Himself suffered and died for us. Our cross we shall have, willing or unwilling. By carrying it willingly and in the spirit of faith and for the love of Christ, we shall find even in this life that suffering is, after all, a blessed thing. As gold is tried in the fire, so is the just man by affliction. Nothing but pure gold can ornament the heavenly court. If by suffering we are made pure gold, should we wish to retain the dross without it?

If God who loves us uses pain to purify, can we not trust Him to be using the best means His love can devise? Mary trusted Him. She was dearer to Him than all others. Unless suffering was a real good, He would not have apportioned so much to her. She never complained, never doubted, never saddened. She is now Queen of Heaven.

If we carry our cross animated by her spirit, it will bring us to where she and her divine Son reign. Then we shall realize that suffering in God's providence has a purpose, a noble purpose, the fashioning of ourselves into a form worthy of association with divinity. "To as many as receive

Him," says St. John, "Christ gives the power to become the children of God." Is it not worth all we suffer to be able in the end to look up into the face of the Creator and say to Him: "Father!"

CHAPTER XX

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

OFTEN one hears it said that so-and-so, a Catholic, got a divorce and was married again by the Church. And then one hears authoritatively that remarriage in the Catholic Church is impossible, divorce or no divorce. How are we to stand in the matter? Are there two codes, one for the privileged class and another for the common folks?

There is no class in the Catholic Church. From pope to peasant, all are equal in faith and in the obligations of faith. The pope could not do for his own sister or brother what he could not do for a toiler in the fields or factory. The Church cannot and has not done for a monarch what it could not do for a mechanic.

In matters which are not of faith and morals, the Church may and does show consideration in particular cases to those who by their position deserve it, but only in matters of accommodation and as a courtesy or mark of gratitude. When it comes to the point of faith or morals, no power on earth can grant an exception.

The pope has great power, but he has not the power to contradict Christ, and the teaching of the Catholic Church is Christ's teaching. What Christ has established as the truth stands forever. This is the deposit of faith of which the Church is the guardian and transmitter. The Church cannot alter it a jot or tittle. All she can do is, if it is called in question, to state authoritatively in the name of Christ just what He meant. The Church has the guarantee of Christ that, in interpreting His mind, she has the guidance of the Holy Ghost and cannot mislead. That is the meaning of infallibility.

Now as regards marriage, is it a teaching of Christ that a Christian marriage is indissoluble? It is. "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" (Mark x, 6; Matt. xix, 6). "Every one that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke xviii, 18). This is plain speech. The apostles, who knew Christ's mind accurately, speak in the same way.

That is why Christ's words in Matthew, xix, 9: "Whoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication," must mean separation, not divorce. Christ distinctly says: "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." That bond

which may not be put asunder may be made less binding, permitting separation, but not severance of the tie with liberty to remarry.

In confirmation of this, hear St. Paul: "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth, but if her husband die, she is at liberty" (I Cor. vii, 39). "Not I, but the Lord, commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband, *and if she depart,* that she remain unmarried" (I Cor. vii, 19). These are plain declarations.

Every passage on marriage must be understood in the light of these unequivocal statements. These pronouncements cover every case. St. Paul specifies separation where it is unavoidable, but expressly states no remarriage: "If she depart, that she remain unmarried."

It is not possible to conceive that St. Paul did not know the meaning of Christ in this matter, nor is it compatible with the divine authorship of the Church that Christ left her in ignorance and error for sixteen centuries on such an important matter of His teaching. Moreover, it seems absolutely inconceivable that He should have withheld the true doctrines of marriage from the apostles and revealed it to men like Henry VIII for proclamation.

No, Christ instituted marriage as Christian

Europe knew and practised it from His day to the day of Luther, and as it will be known and practised by His Church to the end of time.

In view of this legislation on marriage, how is it that we do nevertheless hear of Catholics getting a divorce and remarrying? It all comes about from the loose use of the word divorce. If a Christian marriage is duly contracted and consummated, the Church cannot grant a divorce, allowing remarriage. It has never done so.

What the Church does in certain cases is to declare that there never was a marriage at all. It does not annul a Christian marriage rightly contracted and consummated but states that there was no marriage to annul. The parties were never married; they are just where they were before they fancied they were married.

To demonstrate. A marriage is a contract between a man and a woman by which each gives himself or herself to the other until death does them part. Now a contract supposes certain things in order that it be valid. For instance, suppose you make a civil contract. You must be of legal age, you must have a clear title to what you contract to give, you must not be forced to sign against your will, and so on.

Suppose that you in the best of faith made a contract and afterwards it develops that the thing in question was not yours, that there was a flaw in

the title, so that you could not fulfil the contract. The court would not break a valid contract, but it would say the contract was invalid from the beginning and was no contract in the eyes of the law.

Or suppose you were in the power of unprincipled men, who threatened you with moral and physical harm unless you signed a paper. The court in judging the matter would say: No contract. In other words, the courts realize that for a contract to be valid, certain conditions established by nature and law must be observed. When a contract so made is concluded, no court will break it.

The Church is the legislator for all Christians. Her commission was received from Christ Himself. He declared that a marriage duly performed and consummated is indissoluble. The Church states and determines what constitutes a duly performed marriage. A marriage contracted and consummated under these due rites and conditions is absolutely binding until death severs the bond. But if in the marriage the rite was not duly observed, or if the conditions were not right, the Church may so declare, and in so doing, the marriage never was in reality a marriage.

Whenever, therefore, you hear of so-and-so, a Catholic, being divorced and remarried by the Church, you will understand that the Church simply affirmed that the parties in the former alliance

were never married, and she regards them as single, not married. When you read in the papers about a marriage case before the bishop's court or before the papal tribunal, it is always to investigate if the marriage was a true marriage. There never can be any question about a Christian marriage rightly performed and consummated.

We should not be surprised if, out of the millions of Catholic marriages performed every year, a few should turn out to be invalid. The most careful government in the world has its courts filled with contract cases every year. We know how careful the State is in the matter of contracts, nevertheless invalid contracts are turning up all the time.

The Church is the most careful government in the world. She states what are the conditions for a valid marriage. Before a wedding except for extraordinary reasons, the names of the contracting parties are read out in church and every precaution is taken to have the sacrament duly performed. But as long as our nature is human there will be mistakes, honest mistakes and wilful deceptions here and there, and downright criminal intrigue sometimes.

In these cases, the Church is the judge in the matter, and she acts with the greatest care. At times undeserving and even criminal persons may

profit by her just rulings, and a good and deserving person may suffer. But that is so with all law. Law is for the welfare of the people at large. In safeguarding the whole body, a member may occasionally suffer detriment. The Church legislates for her children the whole world over. Her decisions may sorely affect an individual here and there, but the Christian world benefits.

To see the wisdom of the Church in this matter of marriage, all you have to do is to look at the world outside,—thousands of homes wrecked; children abandoned, alienated and hardened; race-suicide; multiple marriages.

God's way is the best way. Life is serious, married life particularly. Every serious matter requires aids to stability and fidelity. The Church regards marriage as it is, a sacred duty, full of responsibilities, cares, and occasions of misunderstandings. You cannot get out of a business contract because you do not like it or do not want to live up to it. Why should you get out of the greatest contract of life if it does not just suit you?

And that is what many are doing outside the Church, and the family in consequence is suffering grievously. Patriotic men, good men inspired by civic virtue, are thundering against the divorce evil. But will people listen to men if they will not listen to God? And many do not listen to God because

God has been crowded out of consideration these days. But something will bring people to their senses. God has His own way. He may be despised and defied for a time, but only for a time.

CHAPTER XXI

EDUCATION AND RELIGION

CHARACTER is a very subtle thing. It is formed by influences we scarcely suspect. Sometimes the molding of character is so gradual that the process is not noticeable. It is true that, on the other hand, character is sometimes fashioned by a single blow. A sharp reverse, a bitter experience, may bring out qualities which were latent. Ordinarily, however, these blows of misfortune reveal character rather than form it.

The home influence is the best character builder, although in spite of the best home surroundings sometimes a vicious character will result. Still it remains that if, with a good father and mother and family environment, a boy goes wrong, his case would be much worse without those influences.

Moreover, a man, no matter how depraved he may become, has something to fall back on if his early years were wholesome. But the unfortunate who never knew the helpful influence of noble surroundings in youth will have nothing to cling to when life's storm is tossing him to destruction.

Next to the home, the best developer of char-

acter is the school. If the home and the school are what they should be, you send your boy out into the world rightly equipped for the battles ahead. For the proper formation of character, one must supplement the other, the home and school. Now where the home has the proper atmosphere there is no need of constantly drumming into a child the precepts of morality. The environment inculcates virtue much better than precept.

And it is so with the school. If there is about the school something which effectively though silently speaks of the presence in the world of an All-seeing Power, and reminds the pupils that each one has to answer to that Power for the deeds of life, you may readily see the influence on character which will follow.

Moreover, if there is something about the school which speaks to you of the interest in you which that Power has, and the love for you which It manifests, you have an element of character building which is certain to result in noble manhood. If, in addition, there is something which makes one feel that this great All-seeing Power is personal, and that Its love shows itself by sacrifice for each one, there is inculcated in the soul that highest of all character qualities, the spirit of sacrifice.

These are the very things which characterize the

Catholic school. It is not the bit of catechism the child gets that counts. That is necessary, of course, but could be got at home or at Sunday school in many cases. Nor is it the little bit of Catholic history or Catholic practise that may be imparted, although that is good.

But the paramount thing is the environment. That is what counts. A child spends five hours a day at school during school age. It matters a whole lot what sort of a climate those tender years are passed in. When a tender plant has had a good start it can stand a good deal of bad weather. But if it meets bad conditions without a vigorous formation, it yields to the conditions.

The reading, writing and arithmetic in a Catholic school are the same as in the others. I might say they are better taught there, but I shall come to that later. Suffice it to say that to-day the graduate of a parochial school never has to take second place to any other.

The main branches in the Catholic school are the same as in the public school. It is not in regard to what is taught that the influence of the school shows, but in regard to what is left out. There the little ones are five hours a day in the formative period of their lives, and nothing they hear or study in the non-religious school speaks to them of the life beyond.

Of course if every father and mother were ideal,

if they by their lives and teaching instructed their little ones in the things of God, there might be less need of the religious school. But how many parents do supply what the school omits? The father is tired, the mother is busy. Perhaps prayer is insisted on morning and evening, but that is all.

But even if fathers and mothers did their full duty, the religious school is, nevertheless, necessary. For a child is very observant, and after a while he will think that religion is only a domestic affair if he never observes it the livelong day. In the Catholic school, everything speaks to him of the importance of living for the eye of God. And the boy who gets that ingrained in him has character of the right sort.

I do not mean to say that every boy who goes to a Catholic school is an angel, but at least he will be nearer to what he should be than would otherwise be the case. You know how your own child, spite of everything you do for him at home, will sometimes turn out bad. And yet we cannot say that the efforts spent were ill-spent or wasted. How many a man do we come across who, later on in life, has returned to decency by the memory of the example and teaching of his early years.

The example and the teaching in the Catholic school are such as to complete the good done at home, or if neglected at home, to supply for the

neglect. There is the sweet influence of the teacher. Most Catholic schools are taught by men and women who have shown nobility of character by the best of all tests, sacrifice. They have left everything people hold most dear in life in order to devote themselves to God's little ones. They do not work for pay, but for love. Their own lives are not only blameless, but highly virtuous.

It stands to reason that association with such men and women is a big factor in the formation of character. One thing at least is impressed on the soul of the child, and it is this, that there is something else to live for besides this world. It may only be the seed of this truth that develops in the classroom, but the seed is there, and later on in life it fructifies.

Besides the character of the teacher, you have in the Catholic schools a selection of books and methods which tend to develop in the child a sense of the supernatural. Just as in a non-religious school a teacher by a word here and there, or by a story or a sneer, can undermine faith, so in the Catholic school the teacher seizes opportunities at every turn to confirm the faith of the little ones.

And then there are the sweet pious practises which our holy faith knows so well how to impart and which become almost second nature to the

child. Beyond all this there is the distinct study and explanation of the faith. A child who learns the catechism by a lesson once a week only, gets it superficially. But in the Catholic school, the child knows his catechism as he does his spelling or arithmetic.

What a consolation and relief that is to Catholic parents who realize their obligation in the matter. If a man asks you categorically what is the use of the religious school, you might find it hard to actually define the vast benefits it affords, or to point out its superiority expressly. The benefits are too permeating, too subtle, too gradual, to put your finger on them.

You might ask a gardener what is the benefit of his watchful care of his plants, the constant weeding and upturning of soil, and nipping of decayed parts and pruning of good parts, and so on. It would be hard for him to tell you definitely the value of all these things, but he could say to you that, if he neglected them, his plants would be very shabby and unproductive.

And so it is with the tenderest of all plants, the child. Every little care that is rightly bestowed on his morals is going to show later. In the non-religious school the morality of the child is ignored. And yet morality is a bigger factor in his life than any other element.

And religion is the basis of morality. What

good is it to say to Johnny that to do a certain *thing* is not nice? He wants to know what will happen to him if he does *it*. Older folks know that lots of things are not nice, yet when passion calls they go ahead and do them.

You may tell a child that he should not do a thing, but he will do it as soon as your back is turned, if it is merely not nice. And about the only morality inculcated now in non-religious schools is: "Johnny, that is not nice," or "Johnny, that is not proper," or "Johnny, you should not do that"; and Johnny goes ahead and does it.

Even with a sanction for morality, how many fail in it! But without the sanction, there is no morality but what expediency counsels. And it is in this respect the religious school is supreme. The idea of a God above whose law must not be ignored is inculcated by every act of the day. It may seem mere rote for the time being, but it nevertheless takes firm hold of the conscience and becomes a powerful motive through life.

It is the lack of religious principles in education that too often makes our civic life so flagrantly immoral. In society, in business, in politics, people often lose sight of God.

Recently a Jewish rabbi was conversing with me on the subject of young men. He said to me: "Do you hold your young men?" I replied that

we did. "Well, we do not," he rejoined, and then he added: "How do you do it?" I answered that we did it in the way that God appointed, by the Mass, the sacraments, and by religious education.

"Ah, that is it," he sighed, "religious education!" Then he told me that the young people of his race were going to the devil wholesale because they had abandoned Jehovah and had not accepted anything in His stead.

"You know," he continued, "our young men are very clever, and when they get all the advantages of education in this country, and have no religion to go with it, they become just educated animals. Their brains are developed and sharpened just in order to make money and to have a good time, and that is all they live for, and that is why so many of them degenerate into intellectual machines or voluptuaries." And that is the result of education without morality.

Our prominent men are beginning to wake up to the evil. Recently there has been much discussion how to make the schools help the morals as well as the mind. All sorts of propositions have been made. Some would teach morality by biography, by setting before the young examples of noble men. Others would teach natural ethics, others would show the consequences of wrongdoing, and so on.

Everything is proposed except the only thing that will effect the purpose. But recently I have noticed that educators are turning to religion, and they point to the solution of the problem as worked out by Catholics in their parochial schools. Several Protestant denominations are now advocating a system in their own church similar to that of the Catholics.

And while non-Catholics thus see the need of religion in the school, some of our own Catholic people are so silly, I am ashamed to say, as to ape their non-Catholic neighbors and denounce, or at least fail to encourage, the Catholic school. Take away the Catholic school-house, and soon you will not need the church.

Protestants realize that now. Look at their empty churches. Where do the young people of Protestantism now spend their Sundays? How many young folks do you see going to their service on Sunday? And, for that matter, how many of the older folks? I say this, not to rejoice over the decay of Protestantism, but as a note of warning to our own people. I should much prefer to see Protestants good Protestants than what so many of them are rapidly becoming, mere materialists, living only for the life whose horizon is the earth.

And what I say of the parochial school, holds good for higher education also. It is the higher

education that gives us our professional men, our leaders, and if they be irreligious, so will the multitude. Every movement starts from above and works down through the populace. It is only an idea at first, but soon it becomes a living fact in the lives of millions.

If in the schools where philosophy and sciences are taught, the Author of both is contemned by cheap insinuations, or studiously ignored, or openly assailed, the students cannot but reflect that attitude when they go out among their fellow men. And thus the religion which came from heaven and was established on earth by the sacrifice of Calvary, and confirmed by the blood of millions of martyrs, and for which our forefathers suffered the loss of property, liberty and life, is tossed away for a little temporal advantage.

Sometimes we hear Catholics saying that if the Catholic college was up to the standard, their sons would not have to go to the others. And how are they going to be up to the standard if our wealthy and influential people do not make them so?

If as soon as a Catholic becomes somebody, or thinks so, he wants to use college as an avenue to social advancement and so turns his back on his own, of course our colleges will have to struggle on with the pittance supplied by the Catholic whose religion is more to him than social aspirations.

Oxford was Catholic in the days when the aristocrat considered his religion was more than money or anything else. If the Catholics of exalted rank want to have an Oxford in America, it is not by condemning our religious schools, not by sending their sons to build up the already overendowed irreligious colleges and universities, that they will accomplish it, but by getting together and showing some pride in their religion and putting up an establishment for higher education that will equal and surpass anything in the land.

In saying this, I do not admit any inferiority in our present Catholic colleges, but I am pointing out the remedy to those worldly Catholics whose standard of education rests, not on true development of intellect and heart, but on an imposing pile of buildings and on the number of names taken from the social register.

It is admitted by professedly non-Catholic authorities that the curriculum of our Catholic colleges is the very best in the world. To form men, men who can think for themselves and think rightly, there is no course anywhere comparable to that given by Catholic philosophy and ethics. But if you rate a man by the style of his clothes or the latest way of shaking hands or the number of automobiles he drives, I admit you will not find that grade of superiority in the Catholic school.

But, my dear Catholic fathers and mothers, do

you regret the knocks and hardships and privations you had in attaining to your present position? Are you not the better for the occasional lack of comforts you suffered? And will it hurt your boy any if during his college course he has not all the conveniences of a fashionable club?

What is education but developing the man, and that is not accomplished by luxury. In our Catholic colleges to-day there is discipline and application and common wholesome living. No boy ever lost anything by submitting to those conditions. Is not a young man from that environment better equipped for the struggle of life than the perfumed dandy from the hotel-colleges?

And they prove it. Look at the places in life our Catholic graduates are filling. In medicine, law, management and business, you find them distinguished everywhere. And mark this. For a Catholic youth to gain distinction means ten times more than for the others. A large number of graduates from the other schools belong to wealthy and distinguished families. Their success is made to order for them. With money, friends and society to aid them, they are placed on top almost from the start.

But the Catholic boy has nothing but his brains and his character, and he must start from the bottom and climb up. And often he hardly gets a chance to climb, for the way up is crowded with

incompetents and shams that block it. But he gets there. And the discipline of his college days helps him as much as the education he brought away with him.

But as long as many of our influential Catholics insist on patronizing colleges that do not need them nor want them, so long will our Catholic colleges have to struggle on, content with giving to their students nothing but a genuine education of mind and character. But the day will come when sensible Catholics will see their duty, and then, not only in the formation of men shall Catholic colleges surpass all others, but also in architecture and equipment.

The great men of the world have not been fashioned in drawing-rooms, but in the field, in the shop and in the forum. Unfortunately for some, the Catholic college to-day is lacking in drawing-rooms, but it does furnish a young man with self-reliance, the capacity to think rightly, and the culture of the classics. And that is education in the true sense.

If only influential Catholics would unite, as the wealthy Protestants do, and endow our established colleges, what a glory would it be to themselves and their religion. Every one of our colleges is struggling, working as hard to keep going as at instructing its students. We need more and better buildings and equipment and embellish-

ments. We need everything that mere money can furnish.

All the rest we have,—devoted professors, unequaled courses, lofty ideals, and, above all, the true philosophy of life, that philosophy which is based on the religion of Jesus Christ, and without which higher education is but the path away from the greatest object of life.

For after all, life itself is a school. It is here we are educated for entrance into the courts of the heavenly Kingdom. We all shall have to pass an examination on graduating from time into eternity. Why should we concentrate on everything except the matter of that examination? And that is just what education without religion means.

CHAPTER XXI

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CROSS

THE Cross is not only the symbol of Christianity, it is also the Key which solves the problem of life. The Cross, rightly understood, is the most valued knowledge a human being can possess. In one word, the Cross signifies exaltation.

What assured victory means to the hard fought soldier, the Cross means to the soldier of Christ. What assured success means to the hard worked merchant, the Cross means to the Christian toiler of earth. What the assured return to health means to the patient sufferer, the Cross means to the Christian afflicted by the various sufferings and vicissitudes of life. The Cross, understood, exalts us above the miseries of life, raising our vision to our home beyond, where sorrow is turned into joy.

Christ was the great Healer, not only when He was among men, but for all time. No physician diagnoses human ills as Christ, the great Physician, diagnosed the soul of man and its needs.

There is no remedy like His remedy. His remedy is the Cross. When we understand the meaning of the Cross rightly, we shall see that by it Jesus Christ has given us a veritable panacea for the ills, misfortunes and afflictions of life.

Now just what do we understand by the Cross of Christ? Why is it so potent? How does it transform the lowliest and hardest career into one of peace and grandeur? Christ died on the Cross, but how does that make the Cross such a wonderful thing for us?

It was by His death on the Cross that Jesus entered into His glory. It was by the Cross that He conquered death. It was by the Cross that He triumphed over evil. It was by the Cross that He gave to suffering a value which is capable of making us the children of God and the heirs to His kingdom.

What makes suffering terrible? What makes it hard to bear? It is the dead weight of pain and sorrow which it causes. But now suppose that suffering, instead of causing you affliction, should cause you joy, it would lose its dreadfulness, would it not? But is it possible for suffering to cause joy? Why, of course. When you have a broken bone set, it causes suffering, but you are glad to undergo the pain for the time being because of the comfort which it assures afterwards. You even pay the surgeon for the painful

operation, and gladly do so, because it restores to you the use of your limb.

So it is not suffering that is bad, but suffering without any beneficial results. If the suffering is going to bring you great relief or profit, you would rather have the suffering than not have it. Now the Cross enables all our suffering to be the source of immense profit and joy to us.

You have seen a merchant rising early to go to business and while at his store working and slaving all day, and in the evening returning home, tired out but happy, if it has been a day of big business. While a man's business is going on profitably and success is assured, he does not mind long hours, hard work and petty annoyances. But if business is going badly, if failure is staring him in the face, the day seems long, the work wears him out, and little annoyances drive him to peevishness and dejection. The work and worry and suffering are the same in both cases, but in one the assurance of success turns everything into pleasure; in the other, the uselessness of it all makes everything painful.

Now the Cross is the Christian's assurance that all his efforts, sacrifices, sufferings and vicissitudes are working out a most profitable and successful issue. It tells him on the word and example of the Son of God that if we carry our cross patiently after Him, it will exalt us to companionship with

Him. It assures us that no matter what our difficulties and disappointments may be, our life is a glorious success if we follow in the way marked out by Jesus Christ.

And that assurance of God takes all the weight off the Cross and all the sting out of suffering. That is why the saints rejoiced in suffering, actually rejoiced. And that is why every good Catholic finds at least peace and comfort in trial, and bears afflictions at least patiently.

Have you seen how cheerful an invalid is if he receives assurance that he is on the road to recovery? Look at a man suffering from consumption. While he has good hopes of recovery, he does not mind the monotonous diet, the distressing cough, the isolation of a health resort, and all the hard things which his illness necessitates. He is the soul of cheerfulness. Why? The treatment, though painful, promises restoration to health. Yet the best promise is full of uncertainty. But the Cross not only promises but guarantees lasting and unbounded benefits from sufferings rightly borne. That makes the Cross the wonderful help it is.

I remember seeing in one of our city hospitals a patient who was suffering from cancer. The disease had gotten to a stage that was very painful. The man was suffering intensely. One of the physicians had doubts about the disease being

cancer. The X-ray showed that it was not cancer, but a growth which, though painful, would yield to treatment.

When the patient was told this he became another man. He brightened up at once. He was put on a severe diet and had to undergo several minor but painful operations, but did not mind them at all because they promised a sure cure. There he was suffering, yet patient, even happy. And why? The suffering was not a dead, profitless weight of pain, but a means to renewed health and life. And the Cross is the Christians' guarantee that if we suffer for Christ, we shall reign with Him.

I was once called to a man who was in the death-cell of a State Prison awaiting execution. His friends had exerted great influence to have a new trial, and the matter was pending at the time of my visit to the condemned man. Although he was confined to a prison cell and had all the privations and sufferings of convict life, he was nevertheless cheerful and buoyant. He did not mind his surroundings and sufferings. Why? He had hopes of liberty by a new trial. He was enduring all the restrictions and pain of imprisonment, yet he did not feel his hardships because they promised to end in freedom.

About a week later I called to see the man again. Meanwhile a new trial had been refused him and

the day of his execution was not far off. When I saw the condemned man, I hardly recognized him. He had aged in those few days. He was now spiritless, dejected, annoyed at every trifle. He felt his loneliness and restrictions keenly. Why? They were now a dead weight. They were leading nowhere except to a dark, dreadful fate.

I gradually got the poor unfortunate man to realize that he could make even his awful fate a means to liberty,—beyond the grave. I brought him to realize that there is another life beyond, that this life is only the first stage of the journey of man, and that death is the door to eternal life, if a man die as a friend of God.

I showed him how the thief and murderer who was crucified at the side of Christ passed from the cross to Paradise, and I pointed out that if he took his sentence in the spirit of penance for his sinful life, and offered up his sufferings in union with those of the Redeemer, they would bear fruit unto eternal life. I told him that if he turned to God with his whole heart, God's mercy, which is above all His works, would not permit him to be lost forever.

My conversation at the time seemed to have but little effect. However, returning three days later, I found before me a changed man. The Cross of Christ had come into his life, and he faced

his dreadful fate with the exultation of a martyr. He told me that he accepted his imprisonment and suffering as a just punishment for his transgressions. Moreover, he informed me that at every meal since my last visit he picked out the portion of food that he liked best and abstained from it. Also he slept on the stone floor in order to add that as a penance for his sins.

As the day for the execution drew near, the attendants were astonished at his calm, resigned spirit. He went to execution, as he told me he would, feeling that he was following Christ up to Calvary to die alongside Him, as the Good Thief had done. His last words were: "God have mercy on me, a sinner." "As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live." (Ez. xviii, 32.)

That man was converted. That man received eternal life. He may have had a long purgatory, for nothing defiled can enter heaven, but, cleansed and purified by purgatory, his eternal life was assured by his whole-hearted turning to the Lord. That is the meaning of the Cross for the sinner. It turned despair into hope, it brought resignation, and repentance to a prodigal, it brought healing to a soul that was ill, it brought a malefactor from a prison cell to the freedom of eternal life, it made a thief God's friend.

"Not they who are well need the physician,

but they who are ill," says our Lord. No soul is too much defiled by sin to be beyond the healing of the Cross. No soul is too black to be made white by the blood of Him who died on the Cross. For the sinner, therefore, the Cross means forgiveness, renewed life, salvation.

But the Cross has a meaning for others besides sinners. There are many sad and sorrowful and afflicted souls. For them the Cross has a special significance. It shows them Jesus Christ sorrowful unto death, and tells them that His sorrow was turned into joy by the Cross. Jesus's own words come to them: "Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer and thus to enter into His glory?"

He, the Sinless One, carried the Cross for us. Cannot we sinners carry our cross for His sake, seeing that it will make us sharers in His glory? "If we suffer with Him, so shall we reign with Him."

I was once on a sick call to a poor woman who was bedridden for seventeen years. All that time she had never left her couch. It was my custom to bring her Holy Communion once a month. On one occasion I was amazed at her resigned and even cheerful spirit, and I said to her: "My child, you are very good and patient."

"And why shouldn't I be," she replied, "when He suffered so much for me," and, as she spoke, she pointed to a large crucifix at the foot of the

bed. Continuing, she said: "It is not for me to expect better treatment than my Lord had."

That poor invalid taught me a lesson. The Cross had shown her that sufferings had been sanctified by Him who died on it, and that those who, after His example, bore their Cross patiently would one day share His glory in heaven.

That is the message of the Cross to the afflicted. It shows them that their suffering is not dead, useless weight, but that it is working for them an exceedingly great weight of glory. And, as the merchant, who finds that his labors and sacrifices and worries are bringing him success, does not mind all that he endures because of the good outcome, so the Christian sufferer, seeing the fruits of suffering, gladly endures the Cross which brings the Crown.

A man will leave home and comfort and civilization, and will go out into the wilds with pick and shovel and there dig and endure all kinds of hardships in quest of gold. As long as he has expectations the labor and privations seem nothing.

The Cross gives the Christian, not merely expectations, but positive guarantee, that the hardships and afflictions of life will give him the gold of the kingdom of heaven. It is not a venture, it is a certainty. For the guarantee of the Cross has the power of God back of it, and He never fails. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word

will stand forever. "If thou wilt be my disciple, take up thy cross and follow me, and thou shalt have life everlasting."

We know therefore that the Cross is the symbol of the victory, after life's warfare is over. Man's life on earth is a warfare. We all know it. But in the light of the Cross, we feel like soldiers who realize that no matter what the wounds or hardships may be, they are leading to certain victory.

They tell us that, in the exaltation of battle, soldiers do not feel their wounds. Only afterwards when they see the blood do they realize that they were wounded. It is so with the soldiers of the Cross. See how the martyrs went to torture and most terrible death with such calmness that their very persecutors were often converted by the spectacle. See the serene joy in the faces of the Sisters of Charity as they devote their lives to the monotonous drudgery of serving the outcast, the sick and the unfortunate.

Look at Father Damien, who made himself a leper to serve lepers. Behold Francis Xavier, who left the honors of the University of Paris to labor cheerfully in pagan lands, and how he laid down his life, abandoned on a desert shore. See Sir Thomas More, the noblest man in England in the sixteenth century, gladly go to the scaffold rather than hold his honors at the cost of violating his conscience.

These men understood the Cross. They realized that where there was no Cross, there was no Crown. They realized that the Cross must be a blessed thing, since Christ chose it as His standard. "If thou wilt be my disciple, take up thy cross and follow me."

The Cross rightly understood transforms the most commonplace life. It changes the dross of earth into the gold of heaven. It declares to the man in suffering, and to the man who is the victim of injustice, and to the man who has met with disappointment, and to all who are in any way afflicted, that the way of the Cross is the royal road traversed by Christ, and that it leads to the palace of our Father in heaven.

Provided we are in the path which brings us securely to our heavenly inheritance, what matters the roughness of the way or the hardships of the journey? While we walk life's paths under the standard of the Cross, we have the word of God Himself that we are going to Him. That is the meaning and the message of the Cross. That makes it the key to the problem of life.

The Cross shows us that we have not here a lasting city, but seek one that is to come. The Cross shows us that out of this life which is mortal we can make for ourselves immortality, yea, that we can become sharers of the divine nature itself. Life is the time wherein the hand of God shapes

us for the divine life beyond. Here we are the rough block of marble out of which the divine Sculptor chisels us into Godlike forms. The blows of the Sculptor may strike hard, but their purpose is not to damage, but to shape us unto the appointed design.

The Cross of Christ is the symbol of that divine transformation by which we become the brethren of Jesus Christ and the children of the eternal Father. The Cross it is that gives a purpose and meaning to the hardships of life. The Cross it is that reminds us that life is a warfare.

The Cross is the banner of the Christian soldier, and all who fight under it will be crowned with eternal victory. "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me on my throne." The true followers of Christ never see the battle of life except as terminating in victory, never view hardship and injustice apart from the glory they purchase, and never see the Cross without beholding at the same time the Crown!

THE END

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